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Thoreau
Autumn, and Winter

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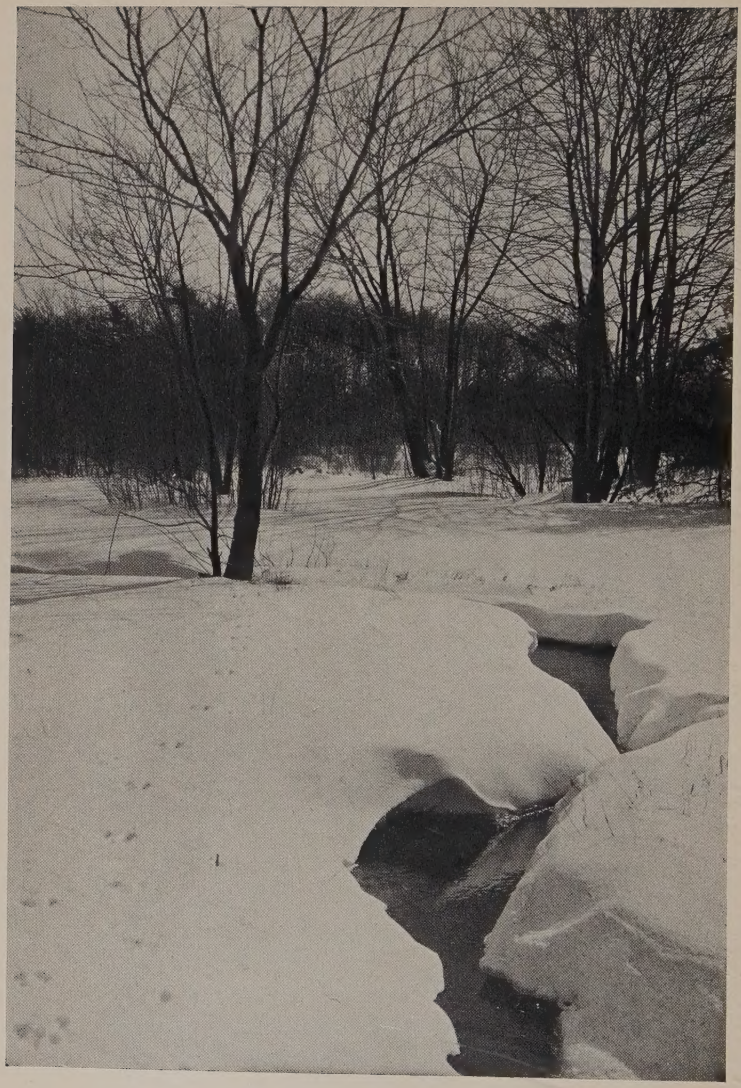

TRACKS IN THE SNOW

The Concord Edition

AUTUMN
AND
WINTER

FROM THE JOURNAL OF
HENRY D. THOREAU

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AUTUMN

From the Journal of
HENRY D. THOREAU

Edited by
H. G. O. BLAKE

AUTUMN.

September 21, 1854. I sometimes seem to myself to owe all my little success, all for which men commend me, to my vices. I am perhaps more willful than others, and make enormous sacrifices even of others' happiness, it may be, to gain my own ends. It would seem as if nothing good could be accomplished without some vice to aid in it.

Sept. 21, 1859. Heard in the night a snapping sound, and the fall of some small body on the floor from time to time. In the morning I found it was produced by the witch-hazel nuts on my desk springing open and casting their seeds quite across my chamber, hard and stony as these nuts were. For several days they are shooting black seeds about my chamber. . . . I suspect that it is not when the witch-hazel nut first gapes open that the seeds fly out, for I see many, if not most of them, open first with the seeds in them; but when I release a seed, it being still held by its base, it flies, as I have said.

I think that its slippery base is compressed by the unyielding shell which at length expels it, just as I can make one fly by pressing it, and letting it slip from between my thumb and finger. It appears to fit close to the shell at its base, even after the shell gapes.

The ex-plenipotentiary refers in after speeches with complacency to the time he spent abroad, and the various lords and distinguished men he met, as to a *deed done*, and an ever memorable occasion. Of what account are titles and offices and opportunities, if you do no memorable deed?

Sept. 21, 1860. . . . P. M. To Easterbrook country. . . . The pods of the broom are nearly half of them open. I perceive that one just ready to open opens with a slight spring, on being touched, and the pod curls a little. I suspect that such seeds as these, which the winds do not transport, will turn out to be more sought by the birds, etc., and so transported by them, than those lighter ones which are furnished with a pappus, and so transported by the wind; *i. e.*, that those which the wind takes are less generally the food of birds and quadrupeds than the heavier and wingless seeds.

Sept. 22, 1852. . . . In love we impart each to each, in subtlest, immaterial form of thought or atmosphere, the best of ourselves, such as

commonly vanishes or evaporates in aspirations, and mutually enrich each other. The lover alone perceives and dwells in a certain human fragrance. To him humanity is not only a flavor, but an aroma and a flavor also.

Sept. 22, 1854. . . . P. M. Over Nawshawtuck. The river is peculiarly smooth, and the water clear and sunny, as I look from the stone bridge. A painted tortoise, with his head out, outside of the weeds, looks as if resting in the air in that attitude, or suggests it, at an angle of 45°, with head and flippers outstretched. . . . As I look off from the hilltop, I wonder if there are any finer days in the year than these, the air is so fine and bracing. The landscape has acquired some fresh verdure withal. The frosts come to ripen the days like fruits, persimmons. . . . Crossing the hill behind Minott's just as the sun is preparing to dip below the horizon, the thin haze in the atmosphere north and south along the western horizon reflects a purple tinge, and bathes the mountains with the same, like a bloom on fruits. I wonder if this phenomenon is observed in warmer weather, or before the frosts have come. Is it not another evidence of the ripe day? I saw it yesterday. . . .

By moonlight all is simple. We are enabled to erect ourselves, our minds, on account of the fewness of objects. We are no longer distracted.

It is simple bread and water. It is simple as the rudiments of an art, a lesson to be taken before sunlight, perchance, to prepare us for that.

Sept. 22, 1858. A clear, cold day. . . . Leave Salem for Cape Ann on foot. . . . One mile southeast of the village of Manchester struck the beach of "musical sand," just this side of a large, high, rocky point called Eagle Head! This is a curving beach; may be one third of a mile long and some twelve rods wide. We found the same kind of sand on a similar but shorter beach on the east side of Eagle Head. We first perceived the sound when we scratched with an umbrella or the finger swiftly and forcibly through the sand; also still louder when we struck forcibly with our heels, "scuffing" along. The wet or damp sand yielded no peculiar sound, nor did that which lay loose and deep next the bank, but only the more compact and dry. The sound was not at all musical, nor was it loud. Fishermen might walk over it all their lives, as indeed they have done, without noticing it. R——, *who had not heard it*, was about right when he said it was like that made by rubbing wet glass with your finger. I thought it as much like the sound made in waxing a table as anything. It was a squeaking sound, as of one particle rubbing on another. I should say it was merely the result of the fric-

tion of peculiarly formed and constituted particles. The surf was high and made a great noise, yet I could hear the sound made by my companion's heels two or three rods distant, and if it had been still, probably could have heard it five or six rods.

Sept. 22, 1860. . . . Some of the early botanists, like Gerard, were prompted and compelled to describe their plants, but most nowadays only measure them, as it were. The former is affected by what he sees, and so inspired to portray it; the latter merely fills out a schedule prepared for him, makes a description *pour servir*. I am constantly assisted by the books in identifying a particular plant and learning some of its humbler uses, but I rarely read a sentence in a botany which reminds me of flowers or living plants. Very few, indeed, write as if they had seen the thing which they pretend to describe.

Sept. 23, 1855. 8 P. M. I hear from my chamber a screech-owl about Monroe's house, this bright moonlight night, — a loud, piercing scream, much like the whinner of a colt, perhaps, a rapid trill, then subdued or smothered, a note or two.

Sept. 23, 1859. . . . What an army of non-producers society produces! . . . Many think themselves well employed as charitable dispens-

ers of wealth which somebody else earned, and these who produce nothing, being of the most luxurious habits, are precisely they who want the most, and complain loudest when they do not get what they want. They who are literally paupers, maintained at the public expense, are the most importunate and insatiable beggars. They cling like the glutton to a living man and suck his vitals up. To any locomotive man there are three or four deadheads clinging, as if they conferred a great favor on society by living upon it. Meanwhile, they fill the churches, and die and revive from time to time. They have nothing to do but sin and repent of their sins. How can you expect such blood-suckers to be happy?

Not only foul and poisonous weeds grow in our tracks, but our vileness and luxuriance make simple, wholesome plants rank and weed-like. All that I ever got a premium for was a monstrous squash, so coarse that nobody could eat it. Some of these bad qualities will be found to lurk in the pears that are invented in the neighborhood of great towns. "The evil that men do lives after them." The corn and potatoes produced by excessive manuring may be said to have not only a coarse, but a poisonous quality. . . . What creatures is the grain raised in the cornfields of Waterloo for, unless it be

for such as prey upon men? Who cuts the grass in the graveyard? I can detect the site of the shanties that have stood all along the railroad by the ranker vegetation. I do not go there for delicate wild flowers. It is important, then, that we should air our lives by removals, excursions into the fields and woods. Starve your vices. Do not sit so long over any cellar hole as to tempt your neighbor to bid for the privilege of digging saltpetre there. So live that only the most beautiful wild flowers will spring up where you have dwelt, harebells, violets, and blue-eyed grass.

Sept. 23, 1860. . . . I hear that a large owl, probably a cat-owl, killed and carried off a full-grown turkey in Carlisle, a few days ago.

Sept. 24, 1851. . . . 8 A. M. To Lee's Bridge via Conantum. It is a cool and windy morning, and I have donned a thick overcoat for a walk. The wind is from the north, so that the telegraph harp does not sound where I cross. . . . This windy, autumnal weather is very exciting and bracing, clear and cold after the rain of yesterday, it having cleared off in the night. . . . The river washes up stream before the wind, with white streaks of foam on its dark surface diagonally to its course, showing the direction of the wind. Its surface, reflecting the sun, is dazzlingly bright. The outlines of the hills are

remarkably distinct and fine, and their surfaces bare and hard, not clothed with a thick air. I notice one red tree, a red maple, against the woodside in Conant's meadow. It is a far brighter red than the blossoms of any tree in summer, and more conspicuous. The huckleberry bushes on Conantum are all turned red.

What can be handsomer for a picture than our river scenery now! First this smoothly shorn meadow on the west side of the stream, looking from Conantum Cliff, with all the swaths distinct, sprinkled with apple-trees casting heavy shadows, black as ink, such as can be seen only in this clear air, this strong light, one cow wandering restlessly about in it, and lowing; then the blue river, scarcely darker than, and hardly to be distinguished from, the sky, its waves driven southward or up stream by the wind, making it to appear to flow that way, bordered by willows and button bushes; then the narrow meadow beyond, with varied lights and shades from its waving grass, which for some reason has not been cut this year, though so dry, now at length each grass-blade bending south before the wintry blast, as if looking for aid in that direction; then the hill, rising sixty feet to a terrace-like plain, covered with shrub oaks, maples, etc., now variously tinted, clad all in a livery of gay colors, each bush a feather in

its cap; and further in the rear, the wood-crowned cliff, some two hundred feet high, where gray rocks here and there project from amidst the bushes, with its orchard on the slope; and to the right of the cliff the distant Lincoln hills in the horizon; the landscape so handsomely colored, the air so clear and wholesome, and the surface of the earth so pleasingly varied that it seems rarely fitted for the abode of man.

Sept. 24, 1858. [Salem.] . . . Saw at the East India Marine Hall a Bay lynx killed in Danvers July 21st (I think in 1827); another killed in Lynnfield in March, 1832. These skins were now, at any rate, quite light, dirty whitish, or white wolfish color, with small pale brown spots. The animals much larger than I expected. Saw a large fossil turtle, some twenty inches in diameter, with the plates distinct, in a slate-colored stone from western New York; also a sword in its scabbard, found in the road near Concord, April 19, 1775, and supposed to have belonged to a British officer.

Sept. 24, 1859. P. M. To Melvin's Preserve. . . . I have many affairs to attend to, and feel hurried these days. Great works of art have endless leisure for a background, as the universe has space. Time stands still while they are created. The artist cannot be in a hurry. The

earth moves round the sun with inconceivable rapidity, and yet the surface of the lake is not ruffled by it. It is not by compromise, it is not by a timid and feeble repentance, that a man will save his soul, and live at last. He must conquer a clear field, letting Repentance & Co. go, that well-meaning but weak firm that has assumed the debts of an old and worthless one. You are to fight in a field where no allowances will be made, no courteous bowing to one-handed knights. You are expected to do your duty, not in spite of every thing but *one*, but in spite of *every thing*. . . .

Going along this old Carlisle road — road for walkers, for berry-pickers, and no more worldly travelers; road for Melvin and Clark, not for the sheriff, nor butcher, nor the baker's jingling cart; road where all wild things and fruits abound, where there are countless rocks to jar those who venture in wagons; road which leads to and through a great but not famous garden, zoölogical and botanical, at whose gate you never arrive, — as I was going along there, I perceived the grateful scent of the Dicksonia fern now partly decayed. It reminds me of all up country, with its springy mountain sides and unexhausted vigor. Is there any essence of Dicksonia fern, I wonder? Surely that giant who my neighbor expects is to bound up the Alle-

ghanies will have his handkerchief scented with that. The sweet fragrance of decay! When I wade through by narrow cow-paths, it is as if I had strayed into an ancient and decayed herb garden. Nature perfumes her garments with this essence now especially. She gives it to those who go a-barberrying and on dank autumnal walks. The very scent of it, if you have a decayed frond in your chamber, will take you far up country in a twinkling. You would think you had gone after the cows there, or were lost on the mountains. It is the scent the earth yielded in the saurian period, before man was created and fell, before milk and water were invented, and the mints. *Rana sylvatica* passed judgment on it, or rather that peculiarly scented *Rana palustris.* It was in his reign it was introduced.

A man must attend to nature closely for many years to know when, as well as where, to look for his objects, since he must always anticipate her a little. Young men have not learned the phases of nature. They do not know what constitutes a year, or that one year is like another. I would know when in the year to expect certain thoughts and moods, as the sportsman knows when to look for plover.

Though you may have sauntered near to heaven's gate, when at length you return toward

the village you give up the enterprise a little, and you begin to fall into the old ruts of thought, like a regular roadster. Your thoughts very properly fail to report themselves to headquarters. They turn toward night and the evening mail, and become begrimed with dust, as if you were just going to put up at (with?) the tavern, or had even come to make an exchange with a brother clergyman on the morrow.

That old Carlisle road, which leaves towns behind; where you put off worldly thoughts; where you do not carry a watch nor remember the proprietor; where the proprietor is the only trespasser, looking after his apples, the only one who mistakes his calling there, whose title is not good; where fifty may be a-barberrying, and you do not see one. It is an endless succession of glades where the barberries grow thickest, successive yards amid the barberry bushes where you do not see out. There I see Melvin and the robins, and many a nut-brown maid. The lonely horse in its pasture is glad to see company, comes forward to be noticed, and takes an apple from your hand. Others are called great roads, but this is greater than they all. It is only laid out, offered to walkers, not accepted by the town and the traveling world; to be represented by a dotted line on charts, or drawn in lime-juice, undiscoverable to the uninitiated, to be held to a warm imagination.

Nature, the earth herself, is the only panacea. They bury poisoned sheep up to the neck in earth to take the poison out of them.

Sept. 25, 1840. Birds were very naturally made the subject of augury, for they are but borderers upon the earth, creatures of another and more ethereal element than our existence can be supported in, which seem to flit between us and the unexplored.

Prosperity is no field for heroism unless it endeavor to establish an independent and supernatural prosperity for itself. In the midst of din and tumult and disorder we hear the trumpet sound. Defeat is heaven's success. We cannot be said to succeed to whom the world shows any favor. In fact, it is the hero's *point d'appui*, which, by offering resistance to his action, enables him to act at all. At each step he spurns the world. He vaults the higher in proportion as he employs the greater resistance of the earth. It is fatal when an elevation has been gained by too wide a concession, retaining no point of resistance; for the hero, like the aeronaut, must float at the mercy of the winds, or cannot sail and steer himself for calm weather. When we rise to the step above, we tread hardest on the step below.

My friend must be my tent companion.

Sept. 25, 1851. I am astonished to find how

much travelers both in the east and west permit themselves to be imposed on by a name; that the traveler in the east, for instance, presumes so great a difference between one Asiatic and another, because one bears the title of Christian, and the other not. At length he comes to a sect of Christians, Armenians or Nestorians, predicates of them a far greater civilization, civility, and humanity than of their neighbors, I suspect not with much truth. At that distance, and therefore impartially viewed, I see but little difference between a Christian and a Mahometan, and thus I perceive that European and American Christians are precisely like these heathenish Armenian and Nestorian Christians; not Christians, of course, in any true sense, but one other heathenish sect in the west, the difference between whose religion and that of the Mahometans is very slight and unimportant. That nation is not Christian where the principles of humanity do not prevail, but the prejudice of race. I expect the Christian not to be superstitious, but to be distinguished by the clearness of his knowledge, the strength of his faith, the breadth of his humanity. A man of another race, an African, for instance, comes to America to travel through it, and he meets with treatment exactly similar to or worse than that which the American meets with among the Turks,

Arabs, and Tartars. The traveler in both cases finds the religion to be a mere superstition and frenzy or rabidness.

Examined a hornets' nest suspended from contiguous huckleberry bushes. The tops of the bushes appearing to grow out of it, little leafy sprigs, had a pleasing effect. It was an inverted cone, eight or nine inches by seven or eight. I found no hornets buzzing about it. Its entrance appeared to have been enlarged, so I concluded it had been deserted, but, looking nearer, I discovered two or three dead hornets, men of war, in the entry way. Cutting off the bushes which sustained it, I proceeded to open it with my knife. First there were half a dozen layers of waved brownish paper resting loosely on one another, occupying nearly an inch in thickness, for a covering. Within were the six-sided cells in three stories, suspended from the roof and from one another by one or two suspension rods only, the lower story much smaller than the rest; and in what may be called the attic of the structure were two live hornets, appearing partially benumbed with cold, but which in the sun seemed rapidly recovering themselves. Most of the cells were empty, but in some were young hornets still, their heads projecting, apparently still-born, perhaps overtaken unexpectedly by cold weather. These

insects appear to be very sensible to cold. The inner circles were of whitish, the outer of grayish, paper.

In these cooler, windier, crystal days, the note of the jay sounds a little more native. Standing on the cliffs, I see them flitting and screaming from pine to pine beneath. Hawks, too, I perceive, sailing about in the clear air, looking white against the green pines, like the seeds of the milkweed. There is almost always a pair of hawks. Their shrill scream and that of the owls and wolves are related to each other.

Sept. 25, 1852. The scarlet of the dogwood is the most conspicuous and interesting of the autumnal colors at present. You can now easily detect them at a distance. Every one in the swamps you have overlooked is revealed. The smooth sumach and the mountain ash are a darker, deeper, bloodier red. Found the fringed gentian November 7th last year.

Sept. 25, 1854. I suspect that I know on what the brilliancy of the autumnal tints will depend. On the greater or less drought of the summer. If the drought has been uncommonly severe, as this year, I should think it would so far destroy the vitality of the leaf that it would attain only to a dull, dead color in autumn; that to become brilliant in autumn, the plant should be full of sap and vigor to the last.

Do I see a *Fringilla hiemalis* in the Deep Cut? It is a month earlier than last year.

I am detained by the very bright red blackberry leaves strewn along the sod, the vine being inconspicuous. How they spot it!

On the shrub oak plain as seen from the Cliffs, the red at least balances the green. It looks like a rich, shaggy rug now, before the woods are changed.

There was a splendid sunset while I was on the water, beginning at the Clamshell reach. All the lower edge of a very broad dark slate cloud, which reached backward almost to the zenith, was lit up through and through with a dun golden fire, the sun being below the horizon, like a furze plain densely on fire a short distance above the horizon. There was a clear pale robin's-egg sky beneath, and some little clouds, on which the light fell, high in the sky, but nearer, seen against the upper part of the distant, uniform, dark slate one, were of a fine grayish silver color, with fine mother-of-pearl tints, unusual at sunset (?). The furze gradually burnt out on the lower edge of the cloud, changed into a smooth, hard, pale pink vermilion, which gradually faded into a gray, satiny pearl, a fine Quaker color. All these colors were prolonged in the rippled reflection to five or six times their proper length. The effect

was particularly remarkable in the case of the reds, which were long bands of red perpendicular in the water.

Sept. 25, 1855. In the evening went to Welch's (?) circus with C——. Approaching, I perceived the peculiar scent which belongs to such places, a certain sourness in the air, suggesting trodden grass and cigar smoke. The curves of the great tent, at least eight or ten rods in diameter, the main central curve, and wherever it rested on a post, suggested that the tent was the origin of much of the Oriental architecture, — the Arabic, perhaps. There was the pagoda in perfection. It is remarkable what graceful attitudes feats of strength and agility seem to require.

Sept. 25, 1859. P. M. To Emerson's Cliff. Holding a white pine needle in my hand and turning it in a favorable light as I sit upon this cliff, I perceive that each of its three edges is notched or serrated with minute forward-pointing bristles. So much does nature avoid an unbroken line that even this slender leaf is serrated, though, to my surprise, neither Gray nor Bigelow mentions it. Loudon, however, says, " Scabrous and inconspicuously serrated in the margin ; spreading in summer, but in winter contracted, and lying close to the branches." Fine and smooth as it looks, it is serrated, after

all. This is its concealed wildness, by which it connects with the wilder oaks.

Sept. 26, 1840. The day, for the most part, is heroic only when it breaks.

Every author writes in the faith that his book is to be the final resting-place, and sets up his fixtures as for a more than Oriental permanence; but it is only a caravansary, which we soon leave without ceremony. We read on his sign only refreshment for man and beast, and a drawn hand directs to Ispahan or Bagdad.

Sept. 26, 1852. Dreamed of purity last night. The thoughts seemed not to originate with me, but I was invested, my thought was tinged by another's thought. It was not I that originated, but I that entertained the thought. P. M. To Ministerial Swamp. The small cottony leaves of fragrant everlasting in the fields for some time, protected, as it were, by a little web of cotton against frost and snow; a little dense web of cotton spun over it, entangled in it, as if to restrain it from rising higher.

The increasing scarlet and yellow tints around the meadows and river remind me of the opening of a vast flower bud. They are the petals of its corolla, which are of the width of the valleys. It is the flower of autumn, whose expanding bud just begins to blush. As yet, however, in the forest there are very few changes of foliage.

The *Polygonum articulatum*, giving a rosy tinge to Jenny's desert, is very interesting now, with its slender dense racemes of rose-tinted flowers, apparently without leaves, rising cleanly out of the sand. It looks warm and brave, a foot or more high, and mingled with deciduous blue curls. It is much divided into many-spreading, slender-racemed branches, with inconspicuous linear leaves, reminding me, both by its form and its colors, of a peach orchard in blossom, especially when the sunlight falls on it; minute rose-tinted flowers that brave the frosts, and advance the summer into fall, warming with their color sandy hillsides and deserts, like the glow of evening reflected on the sand; apparently all flower and no leaf. Rising apparently with clean bare stems from the sand, it spreads out into this graceful head of slender rosy racemes, wisp-like. This little desert of less than an acre blushes with it.

The tree fern is in fruit now, with its delicate tendril-like fruit, climbing three or four feet over the asters, golden-rods, etc., on the edge of the swamp. The large ferns are yellow or brown now. Larks, like robins, fly in flocks. Succory in bloom; . . . it bears the frost well, though we have not had much.

Sept. 26, 1854. It is a warm and very pleasant afternoon. I walk along the river-side in

Merrick's pasture. Some single red maples are very splendid now; the whole tree bright scarlet against the cold green pines, while very few trees are changed, is a most remarkable object in the landscape, seen a mile off. It is too fair to be believed, especially seen against the light. Some are a reddish or else greenish yellow, others with red or yellow cheeks. I suspect that the yellow maples had not scarlet blossoms.

Sept. 26, 1857. P. M. Up river to Clamshell. These are warm, serene, bright autumn afternoons. I see far off the various-colored gowns of cranberry pickers against the green of the meadow. The river stands a little way over the grass again, and the summer is over. The pickerel weed is brown, and I see muskrat houses. I see a large black cricket on the river, a rod from shore, and a fish is leaping at it. As long as the fish leaps it is motionless, as if dead; but as soon as it feels my paddle under it, it is lively enough. I sit on Clamshell bank and look over the meadows. Hundreds of crickets have fallen into a sandy gully, and now are incessantly striving to creep or leap up again on the sliding sand, out of this dusty road into those bare solitudes which they inhabit; such their business this September afternoon.

I watch a marsh hawk circling low along the edge of the meadow, looking for a frog, and now at last it alights to rest on a tussock.

Coming home, the sun is intolerably warm on my left cheek. I perceive it is because the heat of the reflected sun, which is as bright as the real one, is added to that of the real one, for when I cover the reflection with my hand the heat is less intense.

That cricket seemed to know that if he lay quietly spread out on the surface, either the fishes would not suspect him to be an insect, or, if they tried to swallow him, would not be able. What blundering fellows these crickets are, both large and small! They are not only tumbling into the river all along shore, but into this sandy gully, to escape from which is a Sisyphus labor. I have not sat there many minutes, watching two foraging crickets which have decided to climb up two tall and slender weeds almost bare of branches, as a man shins up a liberty pole sometimes, when I find that one has climbed to the summit of my knee. They are incessantly running about on the sunny bank. Their still larger cousins, the mole crickets, are creaking loudly and incessantly all along the shore. Others have eaten themselves cavernous apartments, sitting-room and pantry at once, in windfall apples.

Speaking to Rice of that cricket's escape, he said that he once, with several others, saw a small striped snake swim across a piece of water

about half a rod wide to a half-grown bull-frog which sat on the opposite shore, and attempt to seize him, but he found that he had caught a Tartar, for the bull-frog, seeing him coming, was not afraid of him, but at once seized his head in his mouth and closed his jaws upon it, and he thus held the snake a considerable time before the latter was able, by struggling, to get away. When that cricket felt my oar he leaped without the least hesitation, or perhaps consideration, trusting to fall in a pleasanter place. He was evidently trusting to drift against some weed which should afford him a *point d'appui.*

Sept. 26, 1858. I observe that the seeds of the *Panicum sanguinale* and *filiforme* are perhaps half fallen, evidently affected by the late frosts as chestnuts, etc., will be by later ones; and now is the time, too, when flocks of sparrows begin to scour over the weedy fields, especially in the morning. Methinks they are attracted to some extent by this thin harvest of panic seed. The spikes of *Panicum crus-galli* also are partially bare. Evidently the small graminivorous birds abound more after these seeds are ripe. The seeds of the pigweed are yet apparently quite green. May be they are somewhat peculiar for hanging on all winter.

Sept. 26, 1859. To Clamshell by boat. The *Solanum Dulcamara* berries are another kind

which grows in drooping clusters. I do not know any clusters more graceful and beautiful than these drooping cymes of scarlet or translucent, cherry-colored elliptical berries, with steel-blue or lead-colored (?) purple pedicels (not peduncles) like the leaves on the tips of the branches. No berries, I think, are so well spaced and agreeably arranged in their drooping cymes, somewhat hexagonally, like a honeycomb. Then what a variety of color! The peduncle and its branches are green, the pedicels and sepals only that rare steel-blue purple, and the berries a clear, translucent cherry-red. They hang more gracefully over the river's brim than any pendant in a lady's ear. Yet they are considered poisonous; not to look at, surely. Is it not a reproach that so much that is beautiful is poisonous to us? But why should they not be poisonous? Would it not be bad taste to eat these berries which are ready to feed another sense?

Sept. 27, 1852. P. M. To C. Smith's Hill. The flashing clearness of the atmosphere. More light appears to be reflected from the earth, less absorbed.

At Saw Mill Brook many finely cut and flat ferns are faded whitish and very handsome, as if pressed; very delicate.

The touch-me-not seed vessels go off like pistols, shoot their seeds off like bullets. They explode in my hat.

The arum berries are now in perfection, — cone-shaped spikes one and a half inches long, of scarlet or vermilion-colored, irregular, somewhat pear-shaped berries springing from a purplish core. They are exactly the color of bright sealing-wax, on club-shaped peduncles. The changed leaves are delicately white, especially beneath. Here and there lies prostrate on the damp leaves or ground this conspicuous red spike. The medeola berries are common now, and the large red berries of the panicled Solomon's seal.

It must have been a turtle-dove that eyed me so near, turned its head sidewise to me for a fair view, looking with a St. Vitus twitching of its neck, as if to recover its balance on an unstable perch. That is their way.

From Smith's Hill I looked toward the mountain line. Who can believe that the mountain peak which he beholds fifty miles off in the horizon, rising far and faintly blue above an intermediate range, while he stands on his trivial native hills or in the dusty highway, can be the same as that which he looked up at once near at hand from a gorge in the midst of primitive woods! For a part of two days we traveled across lots, loitering by the way, through primitive woods and swamps, over the highest peak of the Peterboro' Hills to Monadnock, by ways

from which all landlords and stage-drivers endeavored to dissuade us. It was not a month ago. But now that I look across the globe in an instant to that dim Monadnock peak, and these familiar fields and copse-woods appear to occupy the greater part of the interval, I cannot realize that Joe Evely's house still stands there at the base of the mountain, and that I made the long tramp through the woods with invigorating scents before I got to it. I cannot realize that on the tops of those cool blue ridges are berries in abundance still, bluer than themselves, as if they borrowed their blueness from their locality. From the mountains we do not discern our native hills, but from our native hills we look out easily to the far blue mountain which seems to preside over them. As I look northwestward to that summit from a Concord cornfield, how little can I realize all the life that is passing between me and it, the retired up-country farmhouses, the lonely mills, wooded vales, wild rocky pastures, new clearings on stark mountain sides, and rivers murmuring through primitive woods. I see the very peak, — there can be no mistake, — but how much I do not see that is between me and it! In this way we see stars. What is it but a faint blue cloud, a mist that may vanish! But what is it, on the other hand, to one who has traveled to it day after day, has

threaded the forest and climbed the hills that are between this and that, has tasted the raspberries and the blueberries that grow on it and the springs that gush from it, has been wearied with climbing its rocky sides, felt the coolness of its summit, and been lost in the clouds there.

When I could sit in a cold chamber, muffled in a cloak, each evening till Thanksgiving time, warmed by my own thoughts, the world was not so much with me.

Sept. 27, 1855. Yesterday I traced the note of what I have falsely thought the *Rana palustris*, or cricket frog, to its true source. As usual it sounded loud and incessant above all ordinary crickets, and led me at once to a bare and soft sandy shore. After long looking and listening, with my head directly over the spot from which the sound still came at intervals, as I had often done before, I concluded, as no creature was visible, that it must issue from the mud, or rather slimy sand. I noticed that the shore near the water was upheaved and cracked as by a small mole track, and, laying it open with my hand, I found a mole cricket, *Gryllotalpa breviformis*. Harris says their burrows "usually terminate beneath a stone or clod of turf." They live on the roots of grass and other vegetables, and in Europe the corresponding species does a great

deal of harm. They "avoid the light of day, and are active chiefly during the night;" have their burrows "in moist and soft ground, particularly about ponds." "There are no house crickets in America." Among crickets, "the males only are musical." The "shrilling" is produced by shuffling their wing coverts together lengthwise. The French call crickets *cri-cri*. Most of them die on the approach of winter, but a few survive under stones.

See furrows made by many clams now moving into deep water.

Some single red maples now fairly make a show along the meadow. I see a blaze of red reflected from the troubled water.

Sept. 27, 1856. The bluebird family revisit their box and warble as in spring.

P. M. To Clamshell by boat. It is a very fine afternoon to be on the water, somewhat Indian-summer-like. I do not know what constitutes the peculiarity and charm of this weather; the broad water so smooth notwithstanding the slight wind, as if owing to some oiliness the wind slid over without ruffling it. There is a slight coolness in the air, yet the sun is occasionally very warm. I am tempted to say that the air is singularly clear, yet I see it is quite hazy. Perhaps there is that transparency it is said to possess when full of moisture, before or after

TRACKS IN THE SNOW

The Concord Edition

AUTUMN
AND
WINTER

FROM THE JOURNAL OF
HENRY D. THOREAU

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AUTUMN

From the Journal of
HENRY D. THOREAU

Edited by
H. G. O. BLAKE

AUTUMN.

September 21, 1854. I sometimes seem to myself to owe all my little success, all for which men commend me, to my vices. I am perhaps more willful than others, and make enormous sacrifices even of others' happiness, it may be, to gain my own ends. It would seem as if nothing good could be accomplished without some vice to aid in it.

Sept. 21, 1859. Heard in the night a snapping sound, and the fall of some small body on the floor from time to time. In the morning I found it was produced by the witch-hazel nuts on my desk springing open and casting their seeds quite across my chamber, hard and stony as these nuts were. For several days they are shooting black seeds about my chamber. . . . I suspect that it is not when the witch-hazel nut first gapes open that the seeds fly out, for I see many, if not most of them, open first with the seeds in them; but when I release a seed, it being still held by its base, it flies, as I have said.

I think that its slippery base is compressed by the unyielding shell which at length expels it, just as I can make one fly by pressing it, and letting it slip from between my thumb and finger. It appears to fit close to the shell at its base, even after the shell gapes.

The ex-plenipotentiary refers in after speeches with complacency to the time he spent abroad, and the various lords and distinguished men he met, as to a *deed done*, and an ever memorable occasion. Of what account are titles and offices and opportunities, if you do no memorable deed?

Sept. 21, 1860. . . . P. M. To Easterbrook country. . . . The pods of the broom are nearly half of them open. I perceive that one just ready to open opens with a slight spring, on being touched, and the pod curls a little. I suspect that such seeds as these, which the winds do not transport, will turn out to be more sought by the birds, etc., and so transported by them, than those lighter ones which are furnished with a pappus, and so transported by the wind; *i. e.*, that those which the wind takes are less generally the food of birds and quadrupeds than the heavier and wingless seeds.

Sept. 22, 1852. . . . In love we impart each to each, in subtlest, immaterial form of thought or atmosphere, the best of ourselves, such as

commonly vanishes or evaporates in aspirations, and mutually enrich each other. The lover alone perceives and dwells in a certain human fragrance. To him humanity is not only a flavor, but an aroma and a flavor also.

Sept. 22, 1854. . . . P. M. Over Nawshawtuck. The river is peculiarly smooth, and the water clear and sunny, as I look from the stone bridge. A painted tortoise, with his head out, outside of the weeds, looks as if resting in the air in that attitude, or suggests it, at an angle of 45°, with head and flippers outstretched. . . . As I look off from the hilltop, I wonder if there are any finer days in the year than these, the air is so fine and bracing. The landscape has acquired some fresh verdure withal. The frosts come to ripen the days like fruits, persimmons. . . . Crossing the hill behind Minott's just as the sun is preparing to dip below the horizon, the thin haze in the atmosphere north and south along the western horizon reflects a purple tinge, and bathes the mountains with the same, like a bloom on fruits. I wonder if this phenomenon is observed in warmer weather, or before the frosts have come. Is it not another evidence of the ripe day? I saw it yesterday. . . .

By moonlight all is simple. We are enabled to erect ourselves, our minds, on account of the fewness of objects. We are no longer distracted.

It is simple bread and water. It is simple as the rudiments of an art, a lesson to be taken before sunlight, perchance, to prepare us for that.

Sept. 22, 1858. A clear, cold day. . . . Leave Salem for Cape Ann on foot. . . . One mile southeast of the village of Manchester struck the beach of "musical sand," just this side of a large, high, rocky point called Eagle Head! This is a curving beach; may be one third of a mile long and some twelve rods wide. We found the same kind of sand on a similar but shorter beach on the east side of Eagle Head. We first perceived the sound when we scratched with an umbrella or the finger swiftly and forcibly through the sand; also still louder when we struck forcibly with our heels, "scuffing" along. The wet or damp sand yielded no peculiar sound, nor did that which lay loose and deep next the bank, but only the more compact and dry. The sound was not at all musical, nor was it loud. Fishermen might walk over it all their lives, as indeed they have done, without noticing it. R——, *who had not heard it*, was about right when he said it was like that made by rubbing wet glass with your finger. I thought it as much like the sound made in waxing a table as anything. It was a squeaking sound, as of one particle rubbing on another. I should say it was merely the result of the fric-

tion of peculiarly formed and constituted particles. The surf was high and made a great noise, yet I could hear the sound made by my companion's heels two or three rods distant, and if it had been still, probably could have heard it five or six rods.

Sept. 22, 1860. . . . Some of the early botanists, like Gerard, were prompted and compelled to describe their plants, but most nowadays only measure them, as it were. The former is affected by what he sees, and so inspired to portray it; the latter merely fills out a schedule prepared for him, makes a description *pour servir*. I am constantly assisted by the books in identifying a particular plant and learning some of its humbler uses, but I rarely read a sentence in a botany which reminds me of flowers or living plants. Very few, indeed, write as if they had seen the thing which they pretend to describe.

Sept. 23, 1855. 8 P. M. I hear from my chamber a screech-owl about Monroe's house, this bright moonlight night, — a loud, piercing scream, much like the whinner of a colt, perhaps, a rapid trill, then subdued or smothered, a note or two.

Sept. 23, 1859. . . . What an army of non-producers society produces! . . . Many think themselves well employed as charitable dispens-

ers of wealth which somebody else earned, and these who produce nothing, being of the most luxurious habits, are precisely they who want the most, and complain loudest when they do not get what they want. They who are literally paupers, maintained at the public expense, are the most importunate and insatiable beggars. They cling like the glutton to a living man and suck his vitals up. To any locomotive man there are three or four deadheads clinging, as if they conferred a great favor on society by living upon it. Meanwhile, they fill the churches, and die and revive from time to time. They have nothing to do but sin and repent of their sins. How can you expect such blood-suckers to be happy?

Not only foul and poisonous weeds grow in our tracks, but our vileness and luxuriance make simple, wholesome plants rank and weed-like. All that I ever got a premium for was a monstrous squash, so coarse that nobody could eat it. Some of these bad qualities will be found to lurk in the pears that are invented in the neighborhood of great towns. "The evil that men do lives after them." The corn and potatoes produced by excessive manuring may be said to have not only a coarse, but a poisonous quality. . . . What creatures is the grain raised in the cornfields of Waterloo for, unless it be

for such as prey upon men? Who cuts the grass in the graveyard? I can detect the site of the shanties that have stood all along the railroad by the ranker vegetation. I do not go there for delicate wild flowers. It is important, then, that we should air our lives by removals, excursions into the fields and woods. Starve your vices. Do not sit so long over any cellar hole as to tempt your neighbor to bid for the privilege of digging saltpetre there. So live that only the most beautiful wild flowers will spring up where you have dwelt, harebells, violets, and blue-eyed grass.

Sept. 23, 1860. . . . I hear that a large owl, probably a cat-owl, killed and carried off a full-grown turkey in Carlisle, a few days ago.

Sept. 24, 1851. . . . 8 A. M. To Lee's Bridge via Conantum. It is a cool and windy morning, and I have donned a thick overcoat for a walk. The wind is from the north, so that the telegraph harp does not sound where I cross. . . . This windy, autumnal weather is very exciting and bracing, clear and cold after the rain of yesterday, it having cleared off in the night. . . . The river washes up stream before the wind, with white streaks of foam on its dark surface diagonally to its course, showing the direction of the wind. Its surface, reflecting the sun, is dazzlingly bright. The outlines of the hills are

remarkably distinct and fine, and their surfaces bare and hard, not clothed with a thick air. I notice one red tree, a red maple, against the woodside in Conant's meadow. It is a far brighter red than the blossoms of any tree in summer, and more conspicuous. The huckleberry bushes on Conantum are all turned red.

What can be handsomer for a picture than our river scenery now! First this smoothly shorn meadow on the west side of the stream, looking from Conantum Cliff, with all the swaths distinct, sprinkled with apple-trees casting heavy shadows, black as ink, such as can be seen only in this clear air, this strong light, one cow wandering restlessly about in it, and lowing; then the blue river, scarcely darker than, and hardly to be distinguished from, the sky, its waves driven southward or up stream by the wind, making it to appear to flow that way, bordered by willows and button bushes; then the narrow meadow beyond, with varied lights and shades from its waving grass, which for some reason has not been cut this year, though so dry, now at length each grass-blade bending south before the wintry blast, as if looking for aid in that direction; then the hill, rising sixty feet to a terrace-like plain, covered with shrub oaks, maples, etc., now variously tinted, clad all in a livery of gay colors, each bush a feather in

its cap; and further in the rear, the wood-crowned cliff, some two hundred feet high, where gray rocks here and there project from amidst the bushes, with its orchard on the slope; and to the right of the cliff the distant Lincoln hills in the horizon; the landscape so handsomely colored, the air so clear and wholesome, and the surface of the earth so pleasingly varied that it seems rarely fitted for the abode of man.

Sept. 24, 1858. [Salem.] . . . Saw at the East India Marine Hall a Bay lynx killed in Danvers July 21st (I think in 1827); another killed in Lynnfield in March, 1832. These skins were now, at any rate, quite light, dirty whitish, or white wolfish color, with small pale brown spots. The animals much larger than I expected. Saw a large fossil turtle, some twenty inches in diameter, with the plates distinct, in a slate-colored stone from western New York; also a sword in its scabbard, found in the road near Concord, April 19, 1775, and supposed to have belonged to a British officer.

Sept. 24, 1859. P. M. To Melvin's Preserve. . . . I have many affairs to attend to, and feel hurried these days. Great works of art have endless leisure for a background, as the universe has space. Time stands still while they are created. The artist cannot be in a hurry. The

earth moves round the sun with inconceivable rapidity, and yet the surface of the lake is not ruffled by it. It is not by compromise, it is not by a timid and feeble repentance, that a man will save his soul, and live at last. He must conquer a clear field, letting Repentance & Co. go, that well-meaning but weak firm that has assumed the debts of an old and worthless one. You are to fight in a field where no allowances will be made, no courteous bowing to one-handed knights. You are expected to do your duty, not in spite of every thing but *one*, but in spite of *every thing*. . . .

Going along this old Carlisle road — road for walkers, for berry-pickers, and no more worldly travelers; road for Melvin and Clark, not for the sheriff, nor butcher, nor the baker's jingling cart; road where all wild things and fruits abound, where there are countless rocks to jar those who venture in wagons; road which leads to and through a great but not famous garden, zoölogical and botanical, at whose gate you never arrive, — as I was going along there, I perceived the grateful scent of the Dicksonia fern now partly decayed. It reminds me of all up country, with its springy mountain sides and unexhausted vigor. Is there any essence of Dicksonia fern, I wonder? Surely that giant who my neighbor expects is to bound up the Alle-

ghanies will have his handkerchief scented with that. The sweet fragrance of decay! When I wade through by narrow cow-paths, it is as if I had strayed into an ancient and decayed herb garden. Nature perfumes her garments with this essence now especially. She gives it to those who go a-barberrying and on dank autumnal walks. The very scent of it, if you have a decayed frond in your chamber, will take you far up country in a twinkling. You would think you had gone after the cows there, or were lost on the mountains. It is the scent the earth yielded in the saurian period, before man was created and fell, before milk and water were invented, and the mints. *Rana sylvatica* passed judgment on it, or rather that peculiarly scented *Rana palustris*. It was in his reign it was introduced.

A man must attend to nature closely for many years to know when, as well as where, to look for his objects, since he must always anticipate her a little. Young men have not learned the phases of nature. They do not know what constitutes a year, or that one year is like another. I would know when in the year to expect certain thoughts and moods, as the sportsman knows when to look for plover.

Though you may have sauntered near to heaven's gate, when at length you return toward

the village you give up the enterprise a little, and you begin to fall into the old ruts of thought, like a regular roadster. Your thoughts very properly fail to report themselves to headquarters. They turn toward night and the evening mail, and become begrimed with dust, as if you were just going to put up at (with?) the tavern, or had even come to make an exchange with a brother clergyman on the morrow.

That old Carlisle road, which leaves towns behind; where you put off worldly thoughts; where you do not carry a watch nor remember the proprietor; where the proprietor is the only trespasser, looking after his apples, the only one who mistakes his calling there, whose title is not good; where fifty may be a-barberrying, and you do not see one. It is an endless succession of glades where the barberries grow thickest, successive yards amid the barberry bushes where you do not see out. There I see Melvin and the robins, and many a nut-brown maid. The lonely horse in its pasture is glad to see company, comes forward to be noticed, and takes an apple from your hand. Others are called great roads, but this is greater than they all. It is only laid out, offered to walkers, not accepted by the town and the traveling world; to be represented by a dotted line on charts, or drawn in lime-juice, undiscoverable to the uninitiated, to be held to a warm imagination.

Nature, the earth herself, is the only panacea. They bury poisoned sheep up to the neck in earth to take the poison out of them.

Sept. 25, 1840. Birds were very naturally made the subject of augury, for they are but borderers upon the earth, creatures of another and more ethereal element than our existence can be supported in, which seem to flit between us and the unexplored.

Prosperity is no field for heroism unless it endeavor to establish an independent and supernatural prosperity for itself. In the midst of din and tumult and disorder we hear the trumpet sound. Defeat is heaven's success. We cannot be said to succeed to whom the world shows any favor. In fact, it is the hero's *point d'appui*, which, by offering resistance to his action, enables him to act at all. At each step he spurns the world. He vaults the higher in proportion as he employs the greater resistance of the earth. It is fatal when an elevation has been gained by too wide a concession, retaining no point of resistance; for the hero, like the aeronaut, must float at the mercy of the winds, or cannot sail and steer himself for calm weather. When we rise to the step above, we tread hardest on the step below.

My friend must be my tent companion.

Sept. 25, 1851. I am astonished to find how

much travelers both in the east and west permit themselves to be imposed on by a name; that the traveler in the east, for instance, presumes so great a difference between one Asiatic and another, because one bears the title of Christian, and the other not. At length he comes to a sect of Christians, Armenians or Nestorians, predicates of them a far greater civilization, civility, and humanity than of their neighbors, I suspect not with much truth. At that distance, and therefore impartially viewed, I see but little difference between a Christian and a Mahometan, and thus I perceive that European and American Christians are precisely like these heathenish Armenian and Nestorian Christians; not Christians, of course, in any true sense, but one other heathenish sect in the west, the difference between whose religion and that of the Mahometans is very slight and unimportant. That nation is not Christian where the principles of humanity do not prevail, but the prejudice of race. I expect the Christian not to be superstitious, but to be distinguished by the clearness of his knowledge, the strength of his faith, the breadth of his humanity. A man of another race, an African, for instance, comes to America to travel through it, and he meets with treatment exactly similar to or worse than that which the American meets with among the Turks,

Arabs, and Tartars. The traveler in both cases finds the religion to be a mere superstition and frenzy or rabidness.

Examined a hornets' nest suspended from contiguous huckleberry bushes. The tops of the bushes appearing to grow out of it, little leafy sprigs, had a pleasing effect. It was an inverted cone, eight or nine inches by seven or eight. I found no hornets buzzing about it. Its entrance appeared to have been enlarged, so I concluded it had been deserted, but, looking nearer, I discovered two or three dead hornets, men of war, in the entry way. Cutting off the bushes which sustained it, I proceeded to open it with my knife. First there were half a dozen layers of waved brownish paper resting loosely on one another, occupying nearly an inch in thickness, for a covering. Within were the six-sided cells in three stories, suspended from the roof and from one another by one or two suspension rods only, the lower story much smaller than the rest; and in what may be called the attic of the structure were two live hornets, appearing partially benumbed with cold, but which in the sun seemed rapidly recovering themselves. Most of the cells were empty, but in some were young hornets still, their heads projecting, apparently still-born, perhaps overtaken unexpectedly by cold weather. These

insects appear to be very sensible to cold. The inner circles were of whitish, the outer of grayish, paper.

In these cooler, windier, crystal days, the note of the jay sounds a little more native. Standing on the cliffs, I see them flitting and screaming from pine to pine beneath. Hawks, too, I perceive, sailing about in the clear air, looking white against the green pines, like the seeds of the milkweed. There is almost always a pair of hawks. Their shrill scream and that of the owls and wolves are related to each other.

Sept. 25, 1852. The scarlet of the dogwood is the most conspicuous and interesting of the autumnal colors at present. You can now easily detect them at a distance. Every one in the swamps you have overlooked is revealed. The smooth sumach and the mountain ash are a darker, deeper, bloodier red. Found the fringed gentian November 7th last year.

Sept. 25, 1854. I suspect that I know on what the brilliancy of the autumnal tints will depend. On the greater or less drought of the summer. If the drought has been uncommonly severe, as this year, I should think it would so far destroy the vitality of the leaf that it would attain only to a dull, dead color in autumn; that to become brilliant in autumn, the plant should be full of sap and vigor to the last.

Do I see a *Fringilla hiemalis* in the Deep Cut? It is a month earlier than last year.

I am detained by the very bright red blackberry leaves strewn along the sod, the vine being inconspicuous. How they spot it!

On the shrub oak plain as seen from the Cliffs, the red at least balances the green. It looks like a rich, shaggy rug now, before the woods are changed.

There was a splendid sunset while I was on the water, beginning at the Clamshell reach. All the lower edge of a very broad dark slate cloud, which reached backward almost to the zenith, was lit up through and through with a dun golden fire, the sun being below the horizon, like a furze plain densely on fire a short distance above the horizon. There was a clear pale robin's-egg sky beneath, and some little clouds, on which the light fell, high in the sky, but nearer, seen against the upper part of the distant, uniform, dark slate one, were of a fine grayish silver color, with fine mother-of-pearl tints, unusual at sunset (?). The furze gradually burnt out on the lower edge of the cloud, changed into a smooth, hard, pale pink vermilion, which gradually faded into a gray, satiny pearl, a fine Quaker color. All these colors were prolonged in the rippled reflection to five or six times their proper length. The effect

was particularly remarkable in the case of the reds, which were long bands of red perpendicular in the water.

Sept. 25, 1855. In the evening went to Welch's (?) circus with C——. Approaching, I perceived the peculiar scent which belongs to such places, a certain sourness in the air, suggesting trodden grass and cigar smoke. The curves of the great tent, at least eight or ten rods in diameter, the main central curve, and wherever it rested on a post, suggested that the tent was the origin of much of the Oriental architecture, — the Arabic, perhaps. There was the pagoda in perfection. It is remarkable what graceful attitudes feats of strength and agility seem to require.

Sept. 25, 1859. P. M. To Emerson's Cliff. Holding a white pine needle in my hand and turning it in a favorable light as I sit upon this cliff, I perceive that each of its three edges is notched or serrated with minute forward-pointing bristles. So much does nature avoid an unbroken line that even this slender leaf is serrated, though, to my surprise, neither Gray nor Bigelow mentions it. Loudon, however, says, " Scabrous and inconspicuously serrated in the margin; spreading in summer, but in winter contracted, and lying close to the branches." Fine and smooth as it looks, it is serrated, after

all. This is its concealed wildness, by which it connects with the wilder oaks.

Sept. 26, 1840. The day, for the most part, is heroic only when it breaks.

Every author writes in the faith that his book is to be the final resting-place, and sets up his fixtures as for a more than Oriental permanence; but it is only a caravansary, which we soon leave without ceremony. We read on his sign only refreshment for man and beast, and a drawn hand directs to Ispahan or Bagdad.

Sept. 26, 1852. Dreamed of purity last night. The thoughts seemed not to originate with me, but I was invested, my thought was tinged by another's thought. It was not I that originated, but I that entertained the thought. P. M. To Ministerial Swamp. The small cottony leaves of fragrant everlasting in the fields for some time, protected, as it were, by a little web of cotton against frost and snow; a little dense web of cotton spun over it, entangled in it, as if to restrain it from rising higher.

The increasing scarlet and yellow tints around the meadows and river remind me of the opening of a vast flower bud. They are the petals of its corolla, which are of the width of the valleys. It is the flower of autumn, whose expanding bud just begins to blush. As yet, however, in the forest there are very few changes of foliage.

The *Polygonum articulatum*, giving a rosy tinge to Jenny's desert, is very interesting now, with its slender dense racemes of rose-tinted flowers, apparently without leaves, rising cleanly out of the sand. It looks warm and brave, a foot or more high, and mingled with deciduous blue curls. It is much divided into many-spreading, slender-racemed branches, with inconspicuous linear leaves, reminding me, both by its form and its colors, of a peach orchard in blossom, especially when the sunlight falls on it; minute rose-tinted flowers that brave the frosts, and advance the summer into fall, warming with their color sandy hillsides and deserts, like the glow of evening reflected on the sand; apparently all flower and no leaf. Rising apparently with clean bare stems from the sand, it spreads out into this graceful head of slender rosy racemes, wisp-like. This little desert of less than an acre blushes with it.

The tree fern is in fruit now, with its delicate tendril-like fruit, climbing three or four feet over the asters, golden-rods, etc., on the edge of the swamp. The large ferns are yellow or brown now. Larks, like robins, fly in flocks. Succory in bloom; . . . it bears the frost well, though we have not had much.

Sept. 26, 1854. It is a warm and very pleasant afternoon. I walk along the river-side in

Merrick's pasture. Some single red maples are very splendid now; the whole tree bright scarlet against the cold green pines, while very few trees are changed, is a most remarkable object in the landscape, seen a mile off. It is too fair to be believed, especially seen against the light. Some are a reddish or else greenish yellow, others with red or yellow cheeks. I suspect that the yellow maples had not scarlet blossoms.

Sept. 26, 1857. P. M. Up river to Clamshell. These are warm, serene, bright autumn afternoons. I see far off the various-colored gowns of cranberry pickers against the green of the meadow. The river stands a little way over the grass again, and the summer is over. The pickerel weed is brown, and I see muskrat houses. I see a large black cricket on the river, a rod from shore, and a fish is leaping at it. As long as the fish leaps it is motionless, as if dead; but as soon as it feels my paddle under it, it is lively enough. I sit on Clamshell bank and look over the meadows. Hundreds of crickets have fallen into a sandy gully, and now are incessantly striving to creep or leap up again on the sliding sand, out of this dusty road into those bare solitudes which they inhabit; such their business this September afternoon.

I watch a marsh hawk circling low along the edge of the meadow, looking for a frog, and now at last it alights to rest on a tussock.

Coming home, the sun is intolerably warm on my left cheek. I perceive it is because the heat of the reflected sun, which is as bright as the real one, is added to that of the real one, for when I cover the reflection with my hand the heat is less intense.

That cricket seemed to know that if he lay quietly spread out on the surface, either the fishes would not suspect him to be an insect, or, if they tried to swallow him, would not be able. What blundering fellows these crickets are, both large and small! They are not only tumbling into the river all along shore, but into this sandy gully, to escape from which is a Sisyphus labor. I have not sat there many minutes, watching two foraging crickets which have decided to climb up two tall and slender weeds almost bare of branches, as a man shins up a liberty pole sometimes, when I find that one has climbed to the summit of my knee. They are incessantly running about on the sunny bank. Their still larger cousins, the mole crickets, are creaking loudly and incessantly all along the shore. Others have eaten themselves cavernous apartments, sitting-room and pantry at once, in windfall apples.

Speaking to Rice of that cricket's escape, he said that he once, with several others, saw a small striped snake swim across a piece of water

about half a rod wide to a half-grown bull-frog which sat on the opposite shore, and attempt to seize him, but he found that he had caught a Tartar, for the bull-frog, seeing him coming, was not afraid of him, but at once seized his head in his mouth and closed his jaws upon it, and he thus held the snake a considerable time before the latter was able, by struggling, to get away. When that cricket felt my oar he leaped without the least hesitation, or perhaps consideration, trusting to fall in a pleasanter place. He was evidently trusting to drift against some weed which should afford him a *point d'appui*.

Sept. 26, 1858. I observe that the seeds of the *Panicum sanguinale* and *filiforme* are perhaps half fallen, evidently affected by the late frosts as chestnuts, etc., will be by later ones; and now is the time, too, when flocks of sparrows begin to scour over the weedy fields, especially in the morning. Methinks they are attracted to some extent by this thin harvest of panic seed. The spikes of *Panicum crus-galli* also are partially bare. Evidently the small graminivorous birds abound more after these seeds are ripe. The seeds of the pigweed are yet apparently quite green. May be they are somewhat peculiar for hanging on all winter.

Sept. 26, 1859. To Clamshell by boat. The *Solanum Dulcamara* berries are another kind

which grows in drooping clusters. I do not know any clusters more graceful and beautiful than these drooping cymes of scarlet or translucent, cherry-colored elliptical berries, with steel-blue or lead-colored (?) purple pedicels (not peduncles) like the leaves on the tips of the branches. No berries, I think, are so well spaced and agreeably arranged in their drooping cymes, somewhat hexagonally, like a honeycomb. Then what a variety of color! The peduncle and its branches are green, the pedicels and sepals only that rare steel-blue purple, and the berries a clear, translucent cherry-red. They hang more gracefully over the river's brim than any pendant in a lady's ear. Yet they are considered poisonous; not to look at, surely. Is it not a reproach that so much that is beautiful is poisonous to us? But why should they not be poisonous? Would it not be bad taste to eat these berries which are ready to feed another sense?

Sept. 27, 1852. P. M. To C. Smith's Hill. The flashing clearness of the atmosphere. More light appears to be reflected from the earth, less absorbed.

At Saw Mill Brook many finely cut and flat ferns are faded whitish and very handsome, as if pressed; very delicate.

The touch-me-not seed vessels go off like pistols, shoot their seeds off like bullets. They explode in my hat.

The arum berries are now in perfection, — cone-shaped spikes one and a half inches long, of scarlet or vermilion-colored, irregular, somewhat pear-shaped berries springing from a purplish core. They are exactly the color of bright sealing-wax, on club-shaped peduncles. The changed leaves are delicately white, especially beneath. Here and there lies prostrate on the damp leaves or ground this conspicuous red spike. The medeola berries are common now, and the large red berries of the panicled Solomon's seal.

It must have been a turtle-dove that eyed me so near, turned its head sidewise to me for a fair view, looking with a St. Vitus twitching of its neck, as if to recover its balance on an unstable perch. That is their way.

From Smith's Hill I looked toward the mountain line. Who can believe that the mountain peak which he beholds fifty miles off in the horizon, rising far and faintly blue above an intermediate range, while he stands on his trivial native hills or in the dusty highway, can be the same as that which he looked up at once near at hand from a gorge in the midst of primitive woods! For a part of two days we traveled across lots, loitering by the way, through primitive woods and swamps, over the highest peak of the Peterboro' Hills to Monadnock, by ways

from which all landlords and stage-drivers endeavored to dissuade us. It was not a month ago. But now that I look across the globe in an instant to that dim Monadnock peak, and these familiar fields and copse-woods appear to occupy the greater part of the interval, I cannot realize that Joe Evely's house still stands there at the base of the mountain, and that I made the long tramp through the woods with invigorating scents before I got to it. I cannot realize that on the tops of those cool blue ridges are berries in abundance still, bluer than themselves, as if they borrowed their blueness from their locality. From the mountains we do not discern our native hills, but from our native hills we look out easily to the far blue mountain which seems to preside over them. As I look northwestward to that summit from a Concord cornfield, how little can I realize all the life that is passing between me and it, the retired up-country farmhouses, the lonely mills, wooded vales, wild rocky pastures, new clearings on stark mountain sides, and rivers murmuring through primitive woods. I see the very peak, — there can be no mistake, — but how much I do not see that is between me and it! In this way we see stars. What is it but a faint blue cloud, a mist that may vanish! But what is it, on the other hand, to one who has traveled to it day after day, has

threaded the forest and climbed the hills that are between this and that, has tasted the raspberries and the blueberries that grow on it and the springs that gush from it, has been wearied with climbing its rocky sides, felt the coolness of its summit, and been lost in the clouds there.

When I could sit in a cold chamber, muffled in a cloak, each evening till Thanksgiving time, warmed by my own thoughts, the world was not so much with me.

Sept. 27, 1855. Yesterday I traced the note of what I have falsely thought the *Rana palustris*, or cricket frog, to its true source. As usual it sounded loud and incessant above all ordinary crickets, and led me at once to a bare and soft sandy shore. After long looking and listening, with my head directly over the spot from which the sound still came at intervals, as I had often done before, I concluded, as no creature was visible, that it must issue from the mud, or rather slimy sand. I noticed that the shore near the water was upheaved and cracked as by a small mole track, and, laying it open with my hand, I found a mole cricket, *Gryllotalpa breviformis*. Harris says their burrows "usually terminate beneath a stone or clod of turf." They live on the roots of grass and other vegetables, and in Europe the corresponding species does a great

deal of harm. They "avoid the light of day, and are active chiefly during the night;" have their burrows "in moist and soft ground, particularly about ponds." "There are no house crickets in America." Among crickets, "the males only are musical." The "shrilling" is produced by shuffling their wing coverts together lengthwise. The French call crickets *cri-cri*. Most of them die on the approach of winter, but a few survive under stones.

See furrows made by many clams now moving into deep water.

Some single red maples now fairly make a show along the meadow. I see a blaze of red reflected from the troubled water.

Sept. 27, 1856. The bluebird family revisit their box and warble as in spring.

P. M. To Clamshell by boat. It is a very fine afternoon to be on the water, somewhat Indian-summer-like. I do not know what constitutes the peculiarity and charm of this weather; the broad water so smooth notwithstanding the slight wind, as if owing to some oiliness the wind slid over without ruffling it. There is a slight coolness in the air, yet the sun is occasionally very warm. I am tempted to say that the air is singularly clear, yet I see it is quite hazy. Perhaps there is that transparency it is said to possess when full of moisture, before or after

rain. Through this I see the trees beginning to put on their October colors, and the creak of the mole cricket sounds late along the shore.

The *Aster multiflorus* may be easily confounded with the *Aster tradescanti*. Like it, it whitens the roadside in some places. It has purplish disks, but a less straggling top than the *tradescanti*.

Sept. 27, 1857. How out of all proportion to the value of an idea, when you come to one, in Hindoo literature for instance, is the historical fact about it, the when, where, etc., it was actually expressed, and what precisely it might signify to a sect of worshipers! Anything that is called history of India or of the world is impertinent beside any real poetry or inspired thought which is dateless.

White birches have fairly begun to yellow, and blackberry vines here and there in sunny places look like a streak of blood in the grass. I sit on the hillside at Miles's Swamp. A woodbine, investing the leading stem of an elm in the swamp quite to its top, is seen as an erect, slender red column through the thin and yellowing foliage of the elm. As I sit there, I see the shadow of a hawk flying above and behind me. I think I see more hawks nowadays. Perhaps it is both because the young are grown, and their food, the small birds, are flying in flocks

and are abundant. I need only sit still a few minutes on any spot which overlooks the river meadows before I see some black circling mote beating along the meadow's edge, now lost for a moment as it turns edgewise in a peculiar light, now reappearing farther or nearer.

It is most natural, *i. e.*, most in accordance with the natural phenomena, to suppose that North America was discovered from the northern part of the eastern continent, for a study of the range of plants, birds, and quadrupeds points to a connection on that side. Many birds are common to the northern parts of both continents. Even the passenger pigeon has flown across there; and some European plants have been detected on the extreme northeastern coast and islands, which do not extend inland. Men in their migrations obey the same law.

Sept. 27, 1860. Sawing up my raft by river. Monroe's tame ducks sail along and feed near me, as I am working there. Looking up, I see a little dipper, about one half their size, in the middle of the river, evidently attracted by these tame ducks as to a place of security. I sit down and watch it. The tame ducks have paddled four or five rods down stream along the shore. They soon detect the dipper three or four rods off, and betray alarm by a tittering note, especially when it dives, as it does continually. At

last, when it is two or three rods off, and approaching them by diving, they all rush to the shore and come out on it in their fear; but the dipper shows itself close to the shore, and when they enter the water again joins them within two feet, still diving from time to time, and threatening to come up in their midst. They return up stream more or less alarmed, and pursued in this wise by the dipper, who does not know what to make of their fears. It is thus toled along to within twenty feet of where I sit, and I can watch it at my leisure. It has a dark bill, and considerable white on the sides of the head or neck with black between, no tufts, and no observable white on back or tail. When at last disturbed by me, it suddenly sinks low (all its body) in the water without diving. Thus it can float at various heights. So, on the 30th, I saw one suddenly dash along the surface from the meadow ten rods before me to the middle of the river, and then dive, and though I watched fifteen minutes and examined the tufts of grass, I could see no more of it.

Sept. 28, 1840. The world thinks it knows only what it comes in contact with, and whose repelling points give it a configuration to the senses; a hard crust aids its distinct knowledge. But what we truly know has no points of repulsion, and consequently no objective form, being

surveyed from within. We are acquainted with the soul and its phenomena as a bird with the air in which it floats. Distinction is superficial and formal merely. We touch objects as the earth we stand on, but the soul as the air we breathe. We know the world superficially, but the soul centrally. In the one case our surfaces meet, in the other our centres coincide.

Sept. 28, 1851. Hugh Miller, in his "Old Red Sandstone," speaking of "the consistency of style which obtains among the ichthyolites of this formation" and the "microscopic beauty of these ancient fishes," says: "The artist who sculptured the cherry-stone consigned it to a cabinet, and placed a microscope beside it; the microscopic beauty of these ancient fishes was consigned to the twilight depths of a primeval ocean. There is a feeling which at times grows upon the painter and the statuary, as if the perception and love of the beautiful had been sublimed into a kind of moral sense. Art comes to be pursued for its own sake: the exquisite conception in the mind or the elegant and elaborate model becomes all in all to the worker, and the dread of criticism or the appetite for praise almost nothing; and thus, through the influence of a power somewhat akin to conscience, but whose province is not the just and the good, but the fair, the refined, the exquisite, have works, pros-

ecuted in solitude, and never intended for the world, been found fraught with loveliness." The hesitation with which this is said, to say nothing of its simplicity, betrays a latent infidelity, more fatal far than that of the "Vestiges of Creation" which in another work this author endeavors to correct. He describes that as an exception which is in fact the rule. The supposed want of harmony between "the perception and love of the beautiful" and a delicate moral sense betrays what kind of beauty the writer has been conversant with. He speaks of his work becoming all in all to the worker in rising above the dread of criticism and the appetite of praise, as if these were the very rare exceptions in a great artist's life, and not the very definition of it.

2 P. M. To Conantum. For a week or ten days I have ceased to look for new flowers or carry my Botany in my pocket. The fall dandelion is now very fresh and abundant, in its prime.

This swamp [the spruce swamp in Conant's Grove] contains beautiful specimens of the side-saddle flower, *Sarracenia purpurea*, better called pitcher plant. The leaves ray out around the dry scape and flower, which still remain, resting on rich uneven beds of a coarse reddish moss, through which the small-flowered andromeda puts up, presenting altogether a most rich

and luxuriant appearance to the eye. Though the moss is comparatively dry, I cannot walk without upsetting the numerous pitchers, which are now full of water, and so wetting my feet. I once accidentally sat down on such a bed of pitcher plants, and found an uncommonly wet seat where I expected a dry one. These leaves are of various colors, from plain green to a rich striped yellow or deep red. No plants are more richly painted and streaked than the inside of the broad lips of these. Old Josselyn called this "hollow-leaved lavender." I think we have no other plant so singular and remarkable.

Here was a large hornets' nest which, when I went to take, first knocking on it to see if anybody was at home, out came the whole swarm upon me, lively enough. I do not know why they should linger longer than their fellows whom I saw the other day, unless because the swamp is warmer. They were all within, but not working.

What honest, homely, earth-loving, unaspiring houses people used to live in! — that on Conantum, for instance, so low you can put your hand on the eaves behind. There are few whose pride could stoop to enter such a house to-day. And then the broad chimney, built for comfort, not for beauty, with no coping of bricks to catch the eye, no alto or basso relievo.

Sept. 28, 1852. P. M. To the Boulder Field. I find the hood-leaved violet quite abundant in a meadow, and the pedata in the Boulder Field. Those now seen, all but the blanda, palmata, and pubescens, blooming again. Bluebirds, robins, etc., are heard again in the air. This is the commencement, then, of the second spring. Violets, *Potentilla Canadensis*, lambkill, wild rose, yellow lily, etc., begin again.

A windy day. What have these high and roaring winds to do with the fall? No doubt they speak plainly enough to the sap that is in these trees, and perchance check its upward flow.

Ah, if I could put into words that music which I hear; that music which can bring tears to the eyes of marble statues, to which the very muscles of men are obedient!

Sept. 28, 1858. P. M. To Great Fields via Gentian Lane. The gentian (*Andrewsii*) now generally in prime, on low, moist, shady banks. Its transcendent blue shows best in the shade and suggests coolness; contrasts there with the fresh green; a splendid blue, light in the shade, turning to purple with age. They are particularly abundant under the north side of the willow row in Merrick's pasture. I count fifteen in a single cluster there, and afterward twenty in Gentian Lane near Flint's Bridge, and there were other clusters below; bluer than the bluest

sky, they lurk in the moist and shady recesses of the banks.

Sept. 28, 1859. In proportion as a man has a poor ear for music, or loses his ear for it, he is obliged to go far for it, or fetch it from far, or pay a great price for such as he *can* hear. Operas and the like only affect him. It is like the difference between a young and healthy appetite and the appetite of an epicure, an appetite for a sweet crust and for a mock-turtle soup.

As the lion is said to lie in a thicket or in tall reeds and grass by day, slumbering, and sally out at night, just so with the cat. She will ensconce herself for the day in the grass or weeds in some out-of-the-way nook near the house, and arouse herself toward night.

Sept. 29, 1840. Wisdom is a sort of mongrel between Instinct and Prudence, which, however, inclining to the side of the father, will finally assert its pure blood again, as the white race at length prevails over the black. It is minister plenipotentiary from earth to heaven, but occasionally Instinct, like a born celestial, comes to earth and adjusts the controversy.

All fair action in man is the product of enthusiasm. There is enthusiasm in the sunset. The shell on the shore takes new layers and new tints from year to year with such rapture as the bard writes his poem. There is a thrill in the

spring when it buds and blossoms. There is a happiness in the summer, a contentedness in the autumn, a patient repose in the winter. All the birds and blossoms and fruits are the product of enthusiasm. Nature does nothing in the prose mood, though she acts sometimes grimly, with poetic fury, as in earthquakes, etc., and at other times humorously.

Sept. 29, 1851. The intense brilliancy of the red-ripe maples scattered here and there in the midst of the green oaks and hickories on the hilly shore of Walden is quite charming. They are unexpectedly and incredibly brilliant, especially on the western shore and close to the water's edge, where, alternating with yellow birches and poplars and green oaks, they remind me of a line of soldiers, redcoats and riflemen in green mixed together.

The pine is one of the richest of trees, to my eye. It stands like a great moss, a luxuriant mildew, the pumpkin pine, which the earth produces without effort.

Sept. 29, 1853. The witch-hazel at Lee's Cliff, in a favorable situation, has but begun to blossom, has not been long out, so that I think it must be later than the gentian. Its leaves are yellowed. Bluets [Houstonia] still. Lambkill blossoms again.

Sept. 29, 1854. When I look at the stars,

nothing which the astronomers have said attaches to them, they are so simple and remote. Their knowledge is felt to be all terrestrial, and to concern the earth alone. This suggests that the same is the case with every object, however familiar; our so-called knowledge of it is equally vulgar and remote. One might say that all views through a telescope or microscope were purely visionary, for it is only by his eye, and not by any other sense, not by the whole man, that the beholder is there where he is presumed to be. It is a disruptive mode of viewing so far as the beholder is concerned.

Sept. 29, 1856. P. M. To Grape Cliff. I can hardly clamber along this cliff without getting my clothes covered with desmodium ticks, these especially, the rotundifolium and paniculatum. Though you were running for your life, they would have time to catch and cling to your clothes, often the whole row of pods of the *Desmodium paniculatum*, like a piece of saw-blade with three teeth. They will even cling to your hand as you go by. They cling like babes to a mother's breast, by instinct. Instead of being caught ourselves and detained by bird-lime, we are compelled to catch these seeds and carry them with us. These almost invisible nets, as it were, are spread for us, and whole coveys of desmodium and bidens seeds steal transporta-

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tion out of us. I have found myself often covered, as it were, with an imbricated coat of the brown desmodium seeds or a bristling *chevaux-de-frise* of beggar ticks, and had to spend a quarter of an hour or more picking them off in some convenient spot; and so they get just what they wanted, deposited in another place. How surely the *desmodium* growing on some rough cliff-side, or the *bidens* on the edge of a pool, prophesy the coming of the traveler, brute or human, that will transport their seeds on his coat!

Dr. Reynolds told me the other day of a Canada lynx (?) killed in Andover, in a swamp, some years ago, when he was teaching school in Tewksbury, thought to be one of a pair, the other being killed or seen in Derry. Its large track was seen in the snow in Tewksbury, and traced to Andover and back. They saw where it had leaped thirty feet, and where it devoured rabbits. It was on a tree when shot.

Sept. 29, 1859. *Juniperus repens* berries are quite green yet. I see some of last year's dark purple ones at the base of the branchlets. There is a very large specimen on the side of Fair Haven Hill, above Cardinal shore. It is very handsome this bright afternoon, especially if you stand on the lower and sunny side, on account of the various ways in which its surging flakes

and leaflets, green or silvery, reflect the light. It is as if we were giants and looked down on an evergreen forest from whose flaky surface the light is variously reflected. Though so low, it is so dense and rigid that neither men nor cows think of wading through it. We got a bird's-eye view of this evergreen forest, as of a hawk sailing over, looking into its inapproachable clefts and recesses, reflecting a green or else a cheerful silvery light.

Having just dug my potatoes in the garden, which did not turn out very well, I took a basket and trowel and went forth to dig my wild potatoes, or ground nuts, by the railroad fence. I dug up the tubers of some half a dozen plants, and found an unexpected yield. One string weighed a little more than three quarters of a pound. There were thirteen that I should have put with the large potatoes this year, if they had been the common kind. The biggest was two and three quarters inches long, and seven inches in circumference the smallest way. Five would have been called good-sized potatoes. It is but a slender vine, now killed by the frost, and not promising such a yield; but deep in the soil, here sand, five or six inches, or sometimes a foot, you come to the string of brown and commonly knobby nuts. The cuticle of the tuber is more or less cracked longitudinally,

forming meridional furrows, and the root or shoot bears a large proportion to the tuber. In case of a famine I should soon resort to these roots. If they increased in size, on being cultivated, as much as the common potato, they would become monstrous.

Sept. 30, 1851. The white ash has got its autumnal mulberry hue. What is the autumnal tint of the black ash? The former contrasts strongly with the other shade trees on the village street, the elms and buttonwoods, at this season, looking almost black at the first glance. The different characters of the trees appear better now, when their leaves, so to speak, are ripe, than at any other season; than in the winter, for instance, when they are little remarkable, and almost uniformly gray or brown, or in the spring and summer, when they are undistinguishably green. Now, a red maple, an ash, a white birch, a *Populus grandidentata*, etc., is distinguished almost as far as it is visible. It is with leaves as with fruits and woods, animals and men: when they are mature, their different characters appear.

Sept. 30, 1852. 10 A. M. To Fair Haven Pond, bee-hunting, — Pratt, Rice, Hastings, and myself in a wagon. A fine, clear day after the coolest night and severest frost we have had. Our apparatus was first a simple round tin box,

about four and a half inches in diameter and one and a half inches deep, containing a piece of empty honeycomb of its own size and form, filling it within one third of an inch of the top; then a wooden box, about two and a half inches square, with a glass window occupying two thirds of the upper side under a slide, with a couple of narrow slits in the wood, each side of the glass, to admit air, but too narrow for the bees to pass, the whole resting on a circular bottom a little larger than the lid of the tin box, with a sliding door in it. We were earnest to go this week, before the flowers were gone, and we feared the frosty night might make the bees slow to come forth. . . . After eating our lunch we set out on our return [having been unsuccessful thus far]. By the roadside at Walden, on the sunny hillside sloping to the pond, we saw a large mass of golden-rod and aster, several rods square and comparatively fresh. Getting out of our wagon, we found it to be resounding with the hum of bees. It was about one o'clock. Here were far more flowers than we had seen elsewhere, and bees in great numbers, both bumble-bees and honey-bees, as well as butterflies, wasps, and flies. So pouring a mixture of honey and water into the empty comb in the tin box, and holding the lid of the tin box in one hand and the wooden box

with the slides shut in the other, we proceeded to catch the honey-bees by shutting them in suddenly between the lid of the tin box and the large circular bottom of the wooden one, cutting off the flower stem with the edge of the lid at the same time. Then holding the lid still against the wooden box, we drew the slide in the bottom, and also the slide covering the window at the top, that the light might attract the bee to pass up into the wooden box. As soon as he had done so, and was buzzing against the glass, the lower side was closed, and more bees were caught in the same way. Then placing the open tin box close under the wooden one, the slide was drawn again, and the upper slide closed, making it dark, and in about a minute they went to feeding, as was ascertained by raising slightly the wooden box. Then the latter was wholly removed, and they were left feeding or sucking up the honey in broad daylight. In from two to three minutes one had loaded himself and commenced leaving the box. He would buzz round it back and forth a foot or more, and then sometimes, perhaps, finding that he was too heavily loaded, alight to empty himself or clear his feet. Then, starting once more, he would circle round irregularly at first, in a small circle, only a foot or two in diameter, as if to examine the premises, that he might

know them again, till at length, rising higher and higher, and circling wider and wider, and swifter and swifter, till his orbit was ten or twelve feet in diameter, and as much from the ground, though its centre might be moved to one side (all this as if to ascertain the course to his nest), in a minute or less from his first starting, he darted off in a bee line, a waving or sinuous line right and left, toward his nest; that is, as far as I could see him, which might be eight or ten rods, looking against the sky. You had to follow his whole career very attentively indeed, to see when and where he went off at a tangent. It was very difficult to follow him, especially if you looked against a wood or the hill, and you had to lie low to fetch him against the sky. You must operate in an open place, not in a wood. We sent forth as many as a dozen bees, which flew in about three directions, but all toward the village, or where we knew there were hives. They did not fly almost straight, as I had heard, but within three or four feet of the same course, for half a dozen rods, or as far as we could see. Those belonging to one hive all had to digress to get round an apple-tree. As none flew in the right direction for us, we did not attempt to line them. In less than half an hour the first returned to the box, which was lying on a woodpile. Not one of the bees

in the surrounding flowers had discovered it. So they came back one after another, loaded themselves and departed. But now they went off with very little preliminary circling, as if assured of their course. We were furnished with little boxes of red, blue, green, yellow, and white paint in dry powder, and with a stick we sprinkled a little of the red powder on the back of one while he was feeding, gave him a little dab, and it settled down amid the fuzz of his back, and gave him a distinct red jacket. He went off like most of them toward some hives about three quarters of a mile distant, and we observed, by the watch, the time of his departure. In just twenty-two minutes red jacket came back, with enough of the powder still on his back to mark him plainly. He may have gone more than three quarters of a mile. At any rate, he had a head wind to contend with while laden. They fly swiftly and surely to their nests, never resting by the way, and I was surprised, though I had been informed of it, at the distance to which the village bees go for flowers. The rambler in the most remote woods and pastures little thinks that the bees which are humming so industriously on the rare wild flowers he is plucking for the herbarium in some out-of-the-way nook, are, like himself, ramblers from the village, perhaps from his own yard, come to get their honey for

his hives. All the honey-bees we saw were on the blue-stemmed golden-rod, *Solidago cæsia*, which lasts long and which emitted a sweet, agreeable fragrance, not on the asters. I feel the richer for this experience. It taught me that even the insects in my path are not loafers, but have their special errands, not merely and vaguely in this world, but in this hour each is about his business. If there are any sweet flowers still lingering on the hillsides, it is known to the bees, both of the forest and the village. The botanist should make interest with the bees if he would know when the flowers open and when they close. Those above named were the only common and prevailing flowers on which to look for them. Our red jacket had performed the voyage in safety. No bird had picked him up. Are the kingbirds gone? Now is the time to hunt bees and take them up, when their combs are full of honey, and before the flowers are so scarce that they begin to consume the honey they have stored. Forty pounds of honey was the most our company had got hereabouts. We also caught and sent forth a bumble-bee which manœuvred like the others, though we thought he took time to eat some before he loaded himself, and then he was so overloaded and bedaubed that he had to alight after he had started, and it took him several minutes to clear

himself. It is not in vain that the flowers bloom, and bloom late, too, in favored spots. To us they are a culture and a luxury, but to bees meat and drink. The tiny bee which we thought lived far away there in a flower-bell, in that remote vale, is a great voyager, and anon he rises up over the top of the wood, and sets sail with his sweet cargo straight for his distant haven. How well they know the woods and fields, and the haunt of every flower! The flowers are widely dispersed, perhaps because the sweet which they collect from the atmosphere is rare and also widely dispersed, and the bees are enabled to travel far to find it, a precious burden which the heavens bear and deposit on the earth.

Sept. 30, 1858. A large flock of grackles amid the willows by the river-side, or chiefly concealed low in the button bushes beneath them, though quite near me. There they keep up their spluttering notes, though somewhat less loud, I fancy, than in spring. These are the first I have seen, and now for some time I think the redwings have been gone. These are the first arrivers from the north, where they breed.

I observe the peculiar steel-bluish purple of the night-shade, *i. e.*, the tips of the twigs, while all beneath is green, dotted with bright berries over the water. Perhaps this is the most sin-

gular among the autumnal tints. It is almost black in some lights, distinctly steel-blue in the shade, contrasting with the green beneath; but seen against the sun, it is a rich purple, its veins full of fire. The form of the leaf is peculiar.

The pearly everlasting is an interesting white at present. Though the stem and leaves are still green, it is dry and unwithering like an artificial flower; its white flexuous stem and branches, too, like wire wound with cotton. Neither is there any scent to betray it. Its amaranthine quality is instead of high color. Its very brown centre now affects me as a fresh and original color. It monopolizes small circles in the midst of sweet fern, perchance, on a dry hillside.

In our late walk on the Cape [Ann], we entered Gloucester each time in the dark at mid-evening, traveling partly across lots till we fell into the road, and as we were simply seeking a bed, inquiring the way of villagers whom we could not see. The town seemed far more home-like to us than when we made our way out of it in the morning. It was comparatively still, and the inhabitants were sensibly or poetically employed, too. Then we went straight to our chamber, and saw the moonlight reflected from the smooth harbor and lighting up the fishing vessels, as if it had been the harbor of

Venice. By day we went remarking on the peculiar angles of the beveled roofs, of which there is a remarkable variety there. There are also many large square three-story houses, with short windows in the upper story, as if the third story were as good as a gig for respectability. When entering the town by moonlight, we could not always tell whether the road skirted the back yards or the front yards of the houses, and the houses did not so impertinently stare after the traveler and watch his coming as by day. Walking early in the day and approaching the rocky shore from the north, the shadows of the cliffs were very distinct and grateful, and our spirits were buoyant. Though we walked all day, it seemed the days were not long enough to get tired in. Some villages we went through or by, without communicating with any inhabitant, but saw them as quietly and distantly as in a picture.

Oct. 1, 1851. 5 P. M. Just put a fugitive slave, who has taken the name of Henry Williams, into the cars for Canada. He escaped from Stafford County, Virginia, to Boston last October. Has been in Shadrach's place at the Cornhill Coffee House; had been corresponding through an agent with his master, who is his father, about buying himself, his master asking $600, but he having been able to raise

but $500; heard that there were writs out for two Williamses, fugitives, and was informed by his fellow-servants and employer that Auger-hole Burns and others of the police had called for him when he was out. Accordingly he fled to Concord last night on foot, bringing a letter to our family from Mr. Lovejoy, of Cambridge, and another which Garrison had formerly given him on another occasion. He lodged with us and waited in the house till funds were collected with which to forward him. Intended to dispatch him at noon through to Burlington, but when I went to buy his ticket saw one at the station who looked and behaved so much like a Boston policeman that I did not venture that time. He was an intelligent and very well behaved man, a mulatto; said he could guide himself by many other stars than the north star, knowing their rising and setting. They steered for the north star even when it appeared to have got round to the south. They frequently followed the telegraph when there was no railroad.

Oct. 1, 1856. Examined an *Asclepias Cornuti* pod, already opening. As they dry, the pods crack open by the seam along their convex or outer side, revealing the seeds with their silky parachutes, closely packed in an imbricated manner, already right side up, to the number in one instance of 134, as I counted, and again

270. As they lie, they resemble somewhat a round plump fish, with the silk ends exposed at the tail. Children call them fishes. The silk is divided once or twice by the raised partition of the spongy core around which they are arranged. At the top of some more open and drier is already a little clump of loosened seeds and down two or three inches in diameter, held by the converging tips of the down, like meridians, and just ready to float away when the wind rises.

I do not perceive the poetic and dramatic capabilities of an anecdote or story which is told me, its significance, till some time afterwards. One of the qualities of a pregnant fact is that it does not surprise us, and we only perceive afterwards how interesting it is, and then must know all the particulars. We do not enjoy poetry fully unless we know it to be poetry.

Oct. 1, 1858. Let a full-grown but young cock stand near you. How full of life he is from the tip of his bill through his trembling wattles and comb and his bright eye to the extremity of his clean toes! How alert and restless, listening to every sound and watching every motion! How various his notes, from the finest and shrillest alarum, as a hawk sails over, surpassing the most accomplished violinist on the short strings, to a hoarse and terrene voice or cluck! He has a

word for every occasion; for the dog that rushes past, and Partlet cackling in the barn. And then, how, elevating himself and flapping his wings, he gathers impetus and air, and launches forth that world-renowned and ear-piercing strain; not a vulgar note of defiance, but the mere effervescence of life, like the bursting of a bubble in a wine cup. Is any gem so bright as his eye?

The cat sleeps on her head! What does that portend? It is more alarming than a dozen comets. How long prejudice survives! The big-bodied fisherman asks me doubtingly about the comet seen these nights in the northwest — if there is any danger to be apprehended from that side. I would fain suggest that only he is dangerous to himself.

Oct. 1, 1860. Remarkable frost and ice this morning; quite a wintry prospect. The leaves of trees stiff and white at 7 A. M. I hear it was 21°+ this morning early. I do not remember such cold at this season. One man tells me he regretted that he had not taken his mittens with him when he went to his morning's work, mowing in a meadow, and when he went to a spring, at 11 A. M., found the dipper with two inches of ice in it frozen solid.

Oct. 2, 1851. P. M. Some of the white pines on Fair Haven Hill have just reached the

acme of their fall; others have almost entirely shed their leaves. The same is the state of the pitch pines.

Oct. 2, 1852. The beggar ticks, bidens, now adhere to my clothes. I also find the desmodium sooner thus — as a magnet discovers the steel filings in a heap of ashes — than if I used my eyes alone.

How much more beautiful the lakes now, like Fair Haven, surrounded by the autumn-tinted woods and hills, as in an ornamental frame!

Some maples in sprout lands are of a delicate, clear, unspotted red inclining to crimson, surpassing most flowers. I would fain pluck the whole tree and carry it home for a nosegay.

Oct. 2, 1856. Succory still, with its cool blue, here and there, and *Hieracium Canadense* still quite fresh, with its pretty, broad, strap-shaped rays, broadest at the end, alternately long and short, with five very regular sharp teeth in the end of each. The scarlet leaves and stem of the rhexia, some time out of flower, make almost as bright a patch in the meadow now as the flowers did. Its seed vessels are perfect little cream pitchers of graceful form.

The prinos berries are in their prime, seven sixteenths of an inch in diameter. They are scarlet, somewhat lighter than the arum berries. They are now very fresh and bright, and what

adds to their effect is the perfect freshness and greenness of the leaves amid which they are seen. *Gerardia purpurea* still. *Solidago speciosa* completely out, though not a flower was out September 27th, or five days ago; say three or four days. Now and then I see a *Hypericum Canadense* flower still. The leaves of this and the *angulosum* are turned crimson.

I am amused to see four little Irish boys, only five or six years old, getting a horse in a pasture, for their father apparently, who is at work in a neighboring field. They have, all in a row, got hold of a very long halter, and are leading him. All wish to have a hand in it. It is surprising that he obeys such small specimens of humanity, but he seems to be very docile, a real family horse. At length, by dint of pulling and shouting, they get him into a run down a hill, and though he moves very deliberately, scarcely faster than a walk, all but the one at the end of the line soon run to right and left, without having looked behind, expecting him to be upon them. They stop at last at the bars, which are down, and then the family puppy, a brown pointer (?), about two thirds grown, comes bounding to join them and assist. He is as youthful and about as knowing as any of them. The horse marches gravely behind, obeying the faint tug at the halter, or honestly stands

still from time to time, as if not aware that they are pulling at all, though they are all together straining every nerve to start him. It is interesting to behold the faithful beast, the oldest and wisest of the company, thus implicitly obeying the lead of the youngest and weakest.

Corydalis still fresh.

Oct. 2, 1857. Generally speaking, it is only the lower edge of the woods that now shows the bright autumnal tints, while the superstructure is green, the birches, very young oaks and hickories, huckleberry bushes, blueberries, etc., that stand around the edges, though here and there some taller maple flames upward amid the masses of green, or some other riper and mellower tree.

The chief incidents of Minott's life must be more distinct and interesting now than immediately after they occurred, for he has recalled and related them so often that they are stereotyped in his mind. Never having traveled far from his hillside, he does not suspect himself, but tells his stories with fidelity and gusto to the minutest details, as Herodotus does in his histories.

Oct. 3. 1840. No man has imagined what private discourse his members have with surrounding nature, or how much the tenor of that intercourse affects his own health and sickness. While the head goes star-gazing, the legs are not

necessarily astronomers, too, but are acquiring independent experience in lower strata of nature. How much do they feel which they do not impart! How much rumor dies between the knees and the ears! Surely instinct was this experience. I am no more a freeman of my members than of universal nature. After all, the body takes care of itself. It eats, drinks, sleeps, digests, grows, dies, and the best economy is to let it alone in all these.

Why need I travel to seek a site, and consult the points of the compass? My eyes are south windows, and out of these I command a southern prospect. The eye does the least drudgery of any of the senses. It oftenest escapes to a higher employment. The rest serve and escort and defend it. I attach some superiority, even priority, to this sense. It is the oldest servant in the soul's household; it images what it imagines, it ideates what it idealizes. Through it idolatry crept in, which is a kind of religion. If any joy or grief is to be expressed, the eye is the swift runner that carries the news. In circumspection, double, in fidelity, single, it serves truth always, and carries no false news. Of five castes, it is the Brahmin. It converses with the heavens. How man serves this sense more than any other! When he builds a house, he does not forget to put a window in the wall. We

see truth. We are children of light. Our destiny is dark. No other sense has so much to do with the future. The body of science will not be complete till every sense has thus ruled our thought and language and action in its turn.

Oct. 3, 1852. P. M. To Flint's Pond. I hear a hylodes (?) from time to time. Hear the loud laughing of a loon on the pond from time to time, apparently alone in the middle. A wild sound, heard far, and suited to the wildest lake.

Seen from Heywood's Peak at Walden, the shore is now more beautifully painted. The most prominent trees are the red maples and the yellowish aspens.

The pine fall or change has commenced, and the trees are mottled green and yellowish.

Oct. 3, 1853. *Viola lanceolata* in Moore's Swamp.

Oct. 3, 1857. How much more agreeable to sit in the midst of old furniture like Minott's clock and secretary and looking-glass, which have come down from other generations, than amid that which was just brought from the cabinet-maker's, and smells of varnish, like a coffin! To sit under the face of an old clock that has been ticking one hundred and fifty years, — there is something mortal, not to say immortal, about it; a clock that began to tick when Massachusetts was a province.

Oct. 3, 1858. How many men have a fatal excess of manner! There was one came to our house the other evening, and behaved very simply and well till the moment he was passing out the door. He then suddenly put on the airs of a well-bred man, and consciously described some arc of beauty or other with his head or hand. It was but a slight flourish, but it has put me on the alert.

It is interesting to consider how that *crotalaria* spreads itself, sure to find out the most suitable soil. One year I find it on the Great Fields, and think it rare. The next I find it in a new and unexpected place. It flits about like a flock of sparrows from field to field.

Standing on the railroad, I look across the pond to Pine Hill, where the outside trees, and the shrubs scattered generally through the wood, glow yellow and scarlet through the green, like fires just kindled at the base of the trees, a general conflagration just fairly under way, soon to envelop every tree. The hillside forest is all aglow along its edge, and in all its cracks and fissures, and soon the flames will leap upwards to the tops of the tallest trees.

I hear out towards the middle, or a dozen rods from me, the plashing made apparently by the shiners; for they look and shine like them, leaping in schools on the surface. Many lift

themselves quite out for a foot or two, but most rise only part way out, twenty black points at once. There are several schools indulging in this sport from time to time, as they swim slowly along. This I ascertain by paddling out to them. Perhaps they leap and dance in the water just as gnats dance in the air at present. I have seen it before in the fall. Is it peculiar to this season?

The large leaves of some black oak sprouts are dark purple, almost blackish above, but greenish beneath.

Oct. 3, 1859. P. M. To Bateman's Pond; back by the hog pasture and old Carlisle road.

Some faces that I see are so gross that they affect me like a part of the person improperly exposed, and it seems to me that they might be covered, and, if necessary, some other and perhaps better looking part of the person be exposed.

Looking from the hog pasture over the valley of Spencer Brook westward, we see the smoke rising from a huge chimney above a gray roof and the woods at a distance, where some family is preparing its evening meal. There are few more agreeable sights than this to the pedestrian traveler. No cloud is fairer to him than that little bluish one which arises from the chimney. It suggests all of domestic felicity beneath.

There we imagine that life is lived of which we have only dreamed. In our minds we clothe each unseen inhabitant with all the success, all the serenity, we can conceive of. If old, we imagine him serene; if young, hopeful. We have only to see a gray roof with its plume of smoke curling up, to have this faith. There we suspect no coarse haste or bustle, but serene labors which proceed at the same pace with the declining day. There is no hireling in the barn nor in the kitchen. Why are distant valleys, why lakes, why mountains in the horizon, ever fair to us? Because we realize for a moment that they may be the home of man, and that man's life may be in harmony with them. The sky and clouds and earth itself, with their beauty, forever preach to us, saying, Such an abode we offer you, to such a life we encourage you. Here is not haggard poverty and harassing debt; here is not intemperance, moroseness, meanness, or vulgarity. Men go about sketching, painting landscapes, or writing verses which celebrate man's opportunities. To go into an actual farmer's family at evening, see the tired laborers come in from their day's work thinking of their wages, the sluttish help in the kitchen and sink-room, the indifferent stolidity and patient misery which only the spirits of the youngest children rise above, suggests one train of thought; it suggests

another to look down on that roof from a distance, on an October evening, when its smoke is ascending peacefully to join the kindred clouds above. We are ever busy hiring house and lands, and peopling them in our imaginations. There is no beauty in the sky, but in the eye that sees it. Health, high spirits, serenity, are the great landscape painters. Turners, Claudes, Rembrandts, are nothing to them. We never see any beauty but as the garment of some virtue. Consider the infinite promise of a man, so that the sight of his roof at a distance suggests an idyl or a pastoral, or of his grave, an Elegy in a Country Churchyard. How all poets have idealized the farmer's life! What graceful figures and unworldly characters they have assigned to them! Serene as the sky, emulating nature with their calm and peaceful lives.

Oct. 4, 1840. It is vastly easier to discover than to see when the cover is off.

Oct. 4, 1851. Minott was telling me to-day that he used to know a man in Lincoln who had no floor to his barn, but waited till the ground froze, then swept it clean in the barn and threshed his grain on it. He also used to see men threshing their buckwheat in the field where it grew, having just taken off the surface down to a hard pan. He used the word *gavel* to describe a parcel of stalks cast on the ground to

dry. His are good old English words, and I am always sure to find them in the dictionary, though I never heard them before in my life. I was admiring his cornstalks disposed about the barn, to-day, over or astride the braces and the timbers, of such a fresh, clean, and handsome green, retaining their strength and nutritive properties, so unlike the gross and careless husbandry of speculating, money-making farmers, who suffer their stalks to remain out till they are dry and dingy and black as chips. Minott is perhaps the most poetical farmer, the one who most realizes to me the poetry of the farmer's life, that I know. He does nothing with haste and drudgery, but everything as if he loved it. He makes the most of his labor, and takes infinite satisfaction in every part of it. He is not looking forward to the sale of his crops, but he is paid by the constant satisfaction which his labor yields him. He has not too much land to trouble him, too much work to do, no hired man nor boy, but simply to amuse himself and live. He cares not so much to raise a large crop as to do his work well. He knows every pin and nail in his barn. If any part of it is to be floored, he lets no hired man rob him of that amusement, but he goes slowly to the woods, and at his leisure selects a pitch-pine tree, cuts it, and hauls it or gets it hauled to the mill; and so he

knows the history of his barn floor. Farming is an amusement which has lasted him longer than gunning or fishing. He is never in a hurry to get his garden planted, and yet it is always planted soon enough, and none in the town is kept so beautifully clean. He always prophesies a failure of the crops, and yet is satisfied with what he gets. His barn floor is fastened down with oak pins, and he prefers them to iron spikes, which he says will rust and give way. He handles and amuses himself with every ear of his corn crop as much as a child with his playthings, and so his small crop goes a great way. He might well cry if it were carried to market. The seed of weeds is no longer in his soil. He loves to walk in a swamp in windy weather, and hear the wind groan through the pines. He indulges in no luxury of food, or dress, or furniture, yet he is not penurious, but merely simple. If his sister dies before him, he may have to go to the almshouse in his old age, yet he is not poor, for he does not want riches. With never failing rheumatism and trembling hands, he seems yet to enjoy perennial health. Though he never reads a book since he finished the "Naval Monument," he speaks the best of English.

Oct. 4, 1858. Just at the edge of evening, I saw on the sidewalk something bright like fire,

as if molten lead were scattered along, and then I wondered if a drunkard's spittle were luminous, and proceeded to poke it on to a leaf with a stick. It was rotten wood. I found that it came from the bottom of some old fence posts which had just been dug up near by, and there glowed for a foot or two, being quite rotten and soft. It suggested that a lamp-post might be more luminous at bottom than at top. I cut out a handful and carried it about. It was a very pale brown, some almost white, in the light, quite soft and flaky; and as I withdrew it gradually from the light, it began to glow with a distinctly blue fire in its recesses, becoming more universal and whiter as the darkness increased. Carried toward a candle, its light is quite blue. A man whom I met in the street was able to tell the time by his watch, holding it over what was in my hand. The posts were oak, probably white. Mr. M——, the mason, told me that he heard his dog barking the other night, and going out found that it was at the bottom of an old post he had dug up during the day, which was all aglow.

See B—— a-fishing notwithstanding the wind. A man runs down, fails, loses self-respect, and goes a-fishing, though he were never on the river before. Yet methinks his misfortune is good fortune, and he is the more mellow and humane.

Perhaps he begins to perceive more clearly that the object of life is something else than acquiring property, and he really stands in a truer relation to his fellow-men than when he commanded a false respect from them. There he stands at length, perchance better employed than ever, holding communion with nature and himself, and coming to understand his real position and relation to men in the world. It is better than a poor debtors' prison, better than most successful money-getting.

The hickories on the northwest side of this hill are in the prime of their color, of a rich orange; some with green intimately mixed, handsomer than those that are wholly changed. The outmost parts and edges of the foliage are orange; the recesses green, as if the outmost parts, being turned toward the sunny fire, were first baked by it.

Oct. 4, 1859. When I have made a visit where my expectations are not met, I feel as if I owed my hosts an apology for troubling them so. If I am disappointed, I find that I have no right to visit them.

I have always found that what are called the best of manners are the worst, for they are simply the shell without the meat. They cover no life at all. They are the universal slave-holders who treat men as things. Nobody holds you

more cheap than the man of manners. They are marks by the help of which the wearers ignore you, and remain concealed themselves.

All men sympathize by their lower natures, few only by the higher. The appetites of the mistress are commonly the same as those of her servant, but her society is commonly more select. The help may have some of the tenderloin, but she must eat it in the kitchen.

P. M. To Conantum. How interesting now, by wall-sides and on open springy hillsides, the large straggling tufts of the Dicksonia fern above the leaf-strewn green sward, the cold, fall-green sward! They are unusually preserved about the Corner Spring, considering the earliness of this year. Long, handsome, lanceolate green fronds pointing in every direction, recurved and full of fruit, intermixed with yellowish and sere brown and shriveled ones, the whole clump perchance strewn with fallen and withered maple leaves, and overtopped by now withered and unnoticed osmundas. Their lingering greenness is so much the more noticeable now that the leaves generally have changed. They affect us as if they were evergreen, such persistent life and greenness in the midst of decay. No matter how much they are strewn with withered leaves, moist and green they spire above them, not fearing the frosts, fragile as they are. Their green-

ness is so much the more interesting, because so many have already fallen, and we know that the first severer frost will cut off them too. In the summer greenness is cheap, now it is a thing comparatively rare, and is the emblem of life to us.

It is only when we forget all our learning that we begin to know. I do not get nearer by a hair's breadth to any natural object, so long as I presume that I have an introduction to it from some learned man. To conceive of it with a total apprehension, I must for the thousandth time approach it as something totally strange. If you would make acquaintance with the ferns, you must forget your botany. Not a single scientific term or distinction is the least to the purpose. You would fain perceive something, and you must approach the object totally unprejudiced. You must be aware that no thing is what you have taken it to be. In what book is this world and its beauty described? Who has plotted the steps toward the discovery of beauty? You must be in a different state from common. Your greatest success will be simply to perceive that such things are, and you will have no communication to make to the Royal Society. If it were required to know the position of the fruit dots or the character of the indusium, nothing could be easier than to ascertain it; but if

it is required that you be affected by ferns, that they amount to anything, signify anything, to you, that they be another sacred scripture and revelation to you, helping to redeem your life, this end is not so surely accomplished.

I see and hear probably flocks of grackles with their split and shuffling note, but no red-wings for a long time; chipbirds (but without chestnut crowns; is that the case with the young?), baywings on the walls and fences, and the yellow-browed sparrow. Hear the pine warblers in the pines, about the needles, and see them on the ground and on rocks, with a yellow ring round the eye, reddish legs, and a slight whitish bar on the wings. Going over the large hillside stubble field west of Holden wood, I start up a large flock of shore larks, hear their *sveet sveet* and *sveet sveet sveet*, and see their tails dark beneath. They are very wary, and run in the stubble, for the most part invisible, while one or two appear to act the sentinel at some rock, peeping out behind it, perhaps, and give their note of alarm, when away goes the whole flock. Such a flock circled back and forth several times over my head, just like ducks reconnoitring before they alight. If you look with a glass, you are surprised to see how alert the spies are. These larks have dusky bills and legs.

The birds seem to delight in these first fine days of the fall, in the warm hazy light, — robins, bluebirds (in families on the almost bare elms), phœbes, and probably purple finches. I hear half-strains from many of them, as the song sparrow, bluebird, etc., and the sweet *phe-be* of the chickadee. Now the year itself begins to be ripe, ripened by the frost like a persimmon.

The maiden-hair fern at Conantum is apparently unhurt by frost as yet.

Oct. 5, 1840. A part of me, which has reposed in silence all day, goes abroad at night like the owl, and has its day. At night we recline and nestle, and infold ourselves in our being. Each night I go home to rest. Each night I am gathered to my fathers. The soul departs out of the body, and sleeps in God, a divine slumber. As she withdraws herself, the limbs droop and the eyelids fall, and Nature reclaims her clay again. Man has always regarded the night as ambrosial or divine. The air is then peopled, fairies come out.

Oct. 5, 1851. I observe that the woodchuck has two or more holes a rod or two apart: one, or the front door, where the excavated sand is heaped up; another not so easily discovered, very small, without any sand about it, by which he emerges, smaller directly at the surface than beneath, on the principle by which a well is

dug, making as small a hole as possible at the surface, to prevent caving.

Still, purplish asters, late golden-rods, fragrant life-everlasting, purple gerardia, great bidens, etc.

I hear the red-winged blackbirds by the river-side again, as if it were a new spring. They seem to have come to bid farewell. The birds appear to depart with the coming of the frosts which kill the vegetation, and directly or indirectly the insects on which they feed. The American bittern, *Ardea minor*, flew across the river, trailing his legs in the water, scared up by us. This, according to Peabody, is the boomer [stake-driver]. In their sluggish flight, they can hardly keep their legs up. I wonder if they can soar.

8 P. M. To Cliffs. Moon three quarters full. The nights now are very still, for there is hardly any noise of birds or insects. The whippoorwill is not heard, nor the mosquito; only the occasional lisping of some sparrow. As I go through the woods, I perceive a sweet dry scent from the under woods like that of the fragrant life-everlasting. I suppose it is that. I frequently see a light on the ground within thick and dark woods, where all around is in shadow, and hasten forward, expecting to find some decayed and phosphorescent stump, but find it to

be some clear moonlight that falls through a crevice in the leaves.

The fairies are a quiet, gentle folk, invented plainly to inhabit the moonlight. As moonlight is to sunlight, so are the fairies to men.

Oct. 5, 1852. I was told at Bunker Hill Monument to-day that Mr. Savage saw the White Mountains several times while working on the monument. It required very clear weather in the northwest, and a storm clearing up here.

Oct. 5, 1853. The howling of the wind about the house just before a storm to-night sounds extremely like a loon on the pond. How fit!

Oct. 5, 1856. P. M. To Hill and over the pastures westward. In the huckleberry pasture, by the fence of old barn boards, I notice many little pale-brown, dome-shaped puffballs puckered to a centre beneath. When you pinch them, a smoke-like, brown, snuff-colored dust rises from the orifice at their top, just like smoke from a chimney. It is so fine and light that it rises into the air, and is wafted away like smoke from a chimney. They are low Oriental domes or mosques, sometimes crowded together in nests, like a collection of humble cottages on the moor; for there is suggested some humble hearth beneath, from which this smoke comes up, as it were the homes of slugs and crickets.

They please me not a little by their resemblance to rude, dome-shaped, turf-built cottages on the plain, where some humble but everlasting life is lived. I imagine a hearth and pot, and some snug but humble family passing its Sunday evening beneath each one. I locate there at once all that is simple and admirable in human life. There is no virtue which these roofs exclude. I imagine with what contentment and faith I could come home to them at evening. On one I find a slug feeding, with a little hole beneath him; this is a different species, the white pigeon-egg kind, with rough, crystallized surface. A cricket has eaten out the whole inside of another in which he is housed. This before they are turned to dust.

It is well to find your employment and amusement in simple and homely things. These wear best and yield most. I think I would rather watch the motions of these cows in their pasture for a day, which I now see all headed one way and slowly advancing, watch them and project their course carefully on a chart, and report all their behavior faithfully, than wander to Europe or Asia, and watch other motions there; for it is only ourselves that we report in either case, and perchance we shall report a more restless, worthless self in the latter case than the former.

Oct. 5, 1857. There is not now that profusion, and consequent confusion, of events which belongs to a summer walk. There are few flowers, birds, insects, or fruits now, and hence what does occur affects us as more simple and significant, as the cawing of a crow or the scream of a jay. The latter seems to scream more fitly and with more freedom through the vacancies occasioned by fallen maple leaves.

I hear the alarum of a small red squirrel, and see him running by fits and starts along a chestnut bough toward me. His head looks disproportionally large for his body, like a bull-dog's, perhaps because he has his chaps full of nuts. He chirrups and vibrates his tail, holds himself in, and scratches along a foot as if it was a mile. He finds noise and activity for both of us. It is evident that all this ado does not proceed from fear. There is at the bottom, no doubt, an excess of inquisitiveness and caution, but the greater part is make-believe, and a love of the marvelous. He can hardly keep it up till I am gone, however, but takes out his nut and tastes it in the midst of his agitation. "See there, see there," says he. "Who 's that? Oh, dear, what shall I do?" and makes believe run off, but does not get along an inch, lets it all pass off by flashes through his tail, while he clings to the bark as if he were holding in

a race-horse. He gets down the trunk at last upon a projecting knob, head downward, within a rod of you, and chirrups and chatters louder than ever, trying to work himself into a fright. The hind part of his body is urging the forward part along, snapping the tail over it like a whip-lash, but the fore part mostly clings fast to the bark with desperate energy. Squirr, "to throw with a jerk," seems to have quite as much to do with the name as the Greek "skia," "oura," shadow and tail.

Oct. 5, 1858. In the evening I am glad to find that my phosphorescent wood of last night still glows somewhat, but I improve it much by putting it in water. The little chips which remain in the water or sink to the bottom are like so many stars in the sky.

The comet makes a great show these nights. Its tail is at least as long as the whole of the Great Dipper, to whose handle, till within a night or two, it reached in a great curve, and we plainly see stars through it.

Oct. 6, 1840. The revolution of the seasons is a great and steady flow, a graceful, peaceful motion, like the swell on lakes and seas. Nowhere does any rigidity grow upon nature, no muscles harden, no bones protrude, but she is supple-jointed now and always. No rubbish accumulates from day to day, but still does fresh

ness predominate on her cheek, and cleanliness in her attire. The dust settles on the fences and the rocks and the pastures by the roadside, but still the sward is just as green, nay greener, for all that. The morning air is clear even at this day. It is not begrimed with all the dust that has been raised. The dew makes all clean again. Nature keeps her besom always wagging. She has no lumber-room, no dust-hole, in her house. No man was ever yet too nice to walk in her woods and fields. His religion allows the Arab to cleanse his body with sand, when water is not at hand.

Oct. 6, 1851. 7.30 P. M. To Fair Haven Pond by boat, the moon four fifths full; not a cloud in the sky. The water is perfectly still, and the air almost so, the former gleaming like oil in the moonlight, and the moon's disk reflected in it. When we started, saw some fishermen kindling their fire for spearing, by the riverside. It was a lurid, reddish blaze, contrasting with the white light of the moon, with a dense volume of black smoke from the burning pitch-pine roots, rolling upward in the form of an inverted pyramid. The blaze was reflected in the water almost as distinct as the substance. It looked like tarring a ship on the shore of Styx or Cocytus; for it is dark notwithstanding the moon, and there is no sound but the crackling

of the fire. The fishermen can be seen only near at hand, though their fire is visible far away, and then they appear as dusky, fuliginous figures, half enveloped in smoke, seen only by their enlightened sides. Like devils they look, clad in old clothes to defend themselves from the fogs, one standing up forward holding the spear ready to dart, while the smoke and flames are blown in his face, the other paddling the boat slowly and silently along close to the shore with almost imperceptible motion. . . .

Now the fishermen's fire left behind becomes a star. As surely as the sunlight falling through an irregular chink makes a round figure on the opposite wall, so the blaze at a distance appears a star. Such is the effect of the atmosphere. The bright sheen of the moon is constantly traveling with us, and is seen at the same angle in front on the surface of the pads, and the reflection of its disk on the rippled water by our boat-side appears like bright gold pieces falling on the river's counter.

Oct. 6, 1857. I have just read Ruskin's "Modern Painters." I am disappointed in not finding it a more out-of-door book, for I had heard that such was its character. But its title might have warned me. He does not describe nature as nature, but as Turner painted her. Although the work betrays that he has given

close attention to nature, it appears to have been with an artist's and critic's design. How much is written about nature as somebody has portrayed her, how little about nature as she is and chiefly concerns us; *i. e.*, how much prose, how little poetry!

Oct. 7, 1851. By boat to Corner Bridge. A very still, warm, bright, clear afternoon. Our boat so small and low that we are close to the water. The muskrats all the way are now building their houses; about two thirds done. They are of an oval form, composed of mouthfuls of pontederia leaf stems, now dead, the capillaceous roots or leaves of the water marigold and other capillaceous-leaved water-plants, flagroot, a plant which looks like a cock's tail or a peacock's feather in form, the *Potamogeton Robbinsii*, clamshells, etc.; sometimes rising from amidst the dead pontederia stems or resting on the button bushes or the willows. The mouthfuls are disposed in layers successively smaller, forming a somewhat conical mound. Seen at this stage, these houses show some art and a good deal of labor. We pulled one to pieces to examine the inside. There was a small cavity which might hold two or three full-grown muskrats, just above the level of the water, quite wet and of course dark and narrow, communicating immediately with a gallery under water. There were

a few pieces of the white root of some water-plant, perhaps a pontederia or lily, in it. There they dwell in close contiguity to the water itself, always in a wet apartment, in a wet coat never changed, with immeasurable water in the cellar, through which is the only exit. They have reduced life to a lower scale than Diogenes. Certainly they do not fear cold, ague, or consumption. Think of bringing up a family in such a place, worse than a Broad Street cellar! But probably these are not their breeding-places. The muskrat and the fresh-water mussel are very native to our river. The Indian, their human compeer, has departed. This is a settler whom our lowlands and our bogs do not hurt. How long has the muskrat dined on mussels? The river mud itself will have the ague as soon as he. What occasion has he for a dentist? Their unfinished, rapidly rising nests look now like truncated cones. They seem to be all building at once in different parts of the river, and to have advanced equally far.

Saw the *Ardea minor* walking along the shore like a hen with long green legs. Its penciled throat is so like the reeds and other shore plants amid which it holds its head erect to watch the passer that it is difficult to discern it. You can get very near it, for it is unwilling to fly, preferring to hide amid the weeds.

Oct. 7, 1852. P. M. To Great Meadows. I find no fringed gentians. Perhaps the autumnal tints are as bright and interesting now as they will be. Now is the time to behold the maple swamps, one mass of red and yellow, all on fire; these and the blood-red huckleberries are the most conspicuous, and then in the village the warm brownish-yellow elms, and there and elsewhere the dark red ashes. I notice the *Viola ovata*, houstonia, *Ranunculus repens*, caducous polygala, small, scratchgrass polygonum, autumnal dandelion very abundant, small bushy white aster, a few golden-rods, *Polygonum hydropiperoides*, the unknown, flowerless bidens, soapwort gentian, now turned dark purple, yarrow, the white erigeron, red clover, and hedge-mustard.

The muskrats have begun to erect their cabins. Saw one done. Do they build them in the night?

Hear and see larks, bluebirds, robins, and song sparrows. Also see painted tortoises and shad frogs.

I sit on Poplar Hill. It is a warm, Indian-summerish afternoon. The sun comes out of clouds, and lights up and warms the whole scene. It is perfect autumn. I see a hundred smokes rising through the yellow elm tops in the village, where the villagers are preparing for tea. It is the mellowing year. The sunshine harmonizes with the imbrowned and fiery foliage.

Oct. 7, 1857. Halfway up Fair Haven Hill, I am surprised for the thousandth time by the beauty of the landscape, and sit down by the orchard wall to behold it at my leisure. It is always incredibly fair, but ordinarily we are mere objects in it, and not witnesses of it. I see through the bright October air a valley, some two miles across, extending southwest and northeast, with a broad, yellow meadow tinged with brown at the bottom, and a blue river winding slowly through it northward, with a regular edging of low bushes of the same color with the meadow. Skirting the meadow are straggling lines, and occasionally large masses, one quarter of a mile wide, of brilliant scarlet and yellow and crimson trees, backed by green forests and green and russet fields and hills, and on the hills around shoot up a million scarlet and orange and yellow and crimson fires. Here and there amid the trees, often beneath the largest and most graceful of them, are white or gray houses. Beyond stretches a forest, wreath upon wreath, and between each two wreaths I know lies a similar vale, and far beyond all, on the verge of the horizon, rise half a dozen dark blue mountain summits. Large birds of a brilliant blue and white plumage are darting and screaming amid the glowing foliage a quarter of a mile below, while smaller bluebirds are warbling faintly but

sweetly around me. Such is the dwelling-place of man ; but go to a caucus in the village to-night, or to a church to-morrow, and see if there is anything said to suggest that the inhabitants of these houses know what manner of world they live in. It chanced that I heard just then the tolling of a distant funeral bell. Its serious sound was more in harmony with that scenery than any ordinary bustle would have been. It suggested that man must die to his present life before he can appreciate his opportunities and the beauty of the abode that is appointed him.

I do not know how to entertain those who cannot take long walks. The first thing that suggests itself is to get a horse to draw them, and that brings me at once into contact with the stables and dirty harness, and I do not get over my ride for a long time. I give up my forenoon to them, and get along pretty well, the very elasticity of the air and promise of the day abetting me ; but they are as heavy as dumplings by mid-afternoon. If they can't walk, why won't they take an honest nap in the afternoon and let me go? But when two o'clock comes, they alarm me by an evident disposition to sit. In the midst of the most glorious Indian summer afternoon, there they sit, breaking your chairs and wearing out the house, with their backs to the light, taking no note of the lapse of time.

As I sat on the high bank at the east end of Walden this afternoon at five o'clock, I saw by a peculiar intention of the eye, a very striking, sub-aqueous rainbow-like phenomenon. A passer-by might have noticed the reflections of those bright-tinted shrubs along the high shore on the sunny side, but unless on the alert for such effects he would have failed to perceive the full beauty of the phenomenon. Those brilliant shrubs, from three to a dozen feet in height, were all reflected, dimly so far as the details of leaves, etc., were concerned, but brightly as to color, and of course in the order in which they stood, scarlet, yellow, green, etc.; but there being a slight ripple on the surface, these reflections were not true to the height of their substances, only as to color, breadth of base, and order, but were extended downward with mathematical perpendicularity three or four times too far for the height of the substances, forming sharp pyramids of the several colors gradually reduced to mere dusky points. The effect of this prolongation was a very agreeable softening and blending of the colors, especially when a small bush of one bright tint stood directly before another of a contrary and equally bright tint. It was just as if you were to brush firmly aside with your hand or a brush a fresh hue of paint or so many lumps of friable colored powders. There was accord-

ingly a sort of belt, as wide as the height of the hill, extending downward along the whole north or sunny side of the pond, composed of exceedingly short and narrow inverted pyramids of the most brilliant colors intermixed. I have seen similar inverted pyramids in the old drawings of tattooing about the waists of the aborigines of this country. Walden, like an Indian maiden, wears this broad, rainbow-like belt of brilliant-colored points or cones round her waist in October. The colors seem to be reflected and re-reflected from ripple to ripple, losing brightness each time by the softest possible gradation, and tapering towards the beholder.

Oct. 7, 1860. Remarking to old Mr. —— the other day on the abundance of the apples, "Yes," says he, "and fair as dollars, too." That 's the kind of beauty they see in apples.

Many people have a foolish way of talking about small things, and apologize for themselves or another as having attended to such, having neglected their ordinary business, and amused or instructed themselves by attending to small things, when, if the truth were known, their ordinary business was the small thing, and almost their whole lives were misspent.

Oct. 8, 1851. 2 P. M. To the Marlboro' road. Picked up an Indian gouge on Dennis's Hill. Some white oak acorns in the path by a wood-

side I found to be unexpectedly sweet and palatable, the bitterness being scarcely perceptible. To my taste they are quite as good as chestnuts. No wonder the first men lived on acorns. Such as these are no mean food, as they are represented to be. Their sweetness is like the sweetness of bread. The whole world is sweeter to me for having discovered such palatableness in this neglected nut. I am related again to the first men. What can be handsomer, wear better to the eye, than the color of the acorn, like the leaves on which it falls, polished or varnished. I should be at least equally pleased, if I were to find that the grass tasted sweet and nutritious. It increases the number of my friends, it diminishes the number of my foes. How easily, at this season, I could feed myself in the woods! There is mast for me too, as well as for the pigeon and the squirrels, — this Dodonean fruit. The sweet-acorn tree is famous and well known to the boys. There can be no question respecting the wholesomeness of this diet.

The jointed polygonum in the Marlboro' road is an interesting flower, it is so late, so bright a red, though inobvious from its minuteness, without leaves, above the sand like sorrel, mixed with other minute flowers.

An arrow-head at the desert. Filled my pockets with acorns. Found another gouge on

Dennis's Hill. To have found two Indian gouges and tasted sweet acorns, is it not enough for one afternoon?

A warm night like this at this season produces its effect on the village. The boys are heard in the street now at nine o'clock, in greater force and with more noise than usual, and my neighbor has got out his flute.

The moon is full. The tops of the woods in the horizon, seen above the fog, look exactly like long, low, black clouds, the fog being the color of the sky.

Oct. 8, 1857. Walking through the Lee farm swamp, a dozen or more rods from the river, I found a large box trap closed. I opened it and found in it the remains of a gray rabbit, skin, bones, and mould closely fitting the right-angled corner of one side. It was wholly inoffensive, as so much vegetable mould, and must have been dead some years. None of the furniture of the trap remained, only the box itself; the stick which held the bait, the string, etc., were all gone. The box had the appearance of having been floated off in an upright position by a freshet. It had been a rabbit's living tomb. He had gradually starved to death in it. What a tragedy to have occurred within a box in one of our quiet swamps! The trapper lost his box, the rabbit its life. The box had not

been gnawed. After days and nights of moaning and struggle, heard for a few rods through the swamp, increasing weakness and emaciation and delirium, the rabbit breathed its last. They tell you of opening the tomb and finding, by the contortions of the body, that it was buried alive. This was such a case. Let the trapping boy dream of the dead rabbit in its ark, as it sailed, like a small meeting house with its rude spire, slowly, with a grand and solemn motion, far amid the alders.

Oct. 9, 1850. I am always exhilarated, as were the early voyagers, by the sight of sassafras, Laurus sassafras. The green leaves bruised have the fragrance of lemons and a thousand spices. To the same order belong cinnamon, cassia, camphor.

The seed vessel of the sweetbrier is a very beautiful, glossy, elliptical fruit. This shrub, what with the fragrance of its leaves, its blossom, and its fruit, is thrice crowned.

Oct. 9, 1851. Heard two screech owls in the night.

Boiled a quart of acorns for breakfast, but found them not so palatable as the raw, having acquired a bitterish taste, perchance from being boiled with the shells and skins. Yet one would soon get accustomed to this.

2 P. M. To Conantum. I hear the green

locust again on the alders of the causeway, but he is turned straw color. The warm weather has revived them.

All the acorns on the same tree are not equally sweet. They appear to dry sweet.

I see half a dozen snakes in this walk, green and striped, one very young striped snake. They appear to be out enjoying the sun, and to make the most of the last warm days of the year.

The hill and plain on the opposite side of the river are covered with the warm deep red leaves of shrub oak. On Lee's hillside by the pond, the red leaves of some pitch pines are almost of a golden yellow hue seen in the sunlight, a rich autumnal look. The green are, as it were, set in the yellow.

The witch hazel here is in full blossom on this magical hillside, while its broad yellow leaves are falling. Some bushes are completely bare of leaves, and leather-colored they strew the ground. It is an extremely interesting plant, October and November child, and yet reminds me of the very earliest spring. Its blossoms smell like the spring, like the willow catkins. By their color as well as fragrance they belong to the saffron dawn of the year, suggesting amid all these signs of autumn, falling leaves, and frost, that the life of nature by which she eternally flourishes is untouched. It stands here in

the shadow on the side of the hill, while the sunlight from over the top of the hill lights up its topmost sprays and yellow blossoms. Its spray, so jointed and angular, is not to be mistaken for any other. I lie on my back with joy under its boughs. While its leaves fall, its blossoms spring. The autumn, then, is indeed a spring. All the year is a spring. I see two blackbirds high overhead going south, but I am going in my thoughts with these hazel blossoms. It is a fairy place. This is a part of the immortality of the soul. When I was thinking that it bloomed too late for bees or other insects to extract honey from its flowers, that perchance they yielded no honey, I saw a bee upon it. How important, then, to the bees this late blossoming plant.

A large sassafras tree behind Lee's, two feet in diameter at the ground.

There is a thick bed of leaves in the road under Hubbard's elms. This reminds me of Cato, as if the ancients made more use of nature than we. He says, "Stramenta si deerunt, frondem iligneam legito; eam substernito ovibus bubusque." If litter is wanting, gather the leaves of the holm oak, and strew them under your sheep and oxen. In another place he says, "Circum vias ulmos serito et partim populos, uti frondem ovibus et bubus habeas."

There is little or no use made by us of the leaves of trees, not even for beds, unless it be sometimes to rake them up in the woods, and cast them into hogpens and compost heaps.

Oct. 9, 1857. It has come to this, that the lover of art is one, and the lover of nature another, though true art is but the expression of our love of nature. It is monstrous when one cares but little about trees, and much about Corinthian columns ; yet this is exceedingly common.

Oct. 9, 1858. I watch two marsh hawks which rise from the woods before me as I sit on the cliff, at first plunging at each other, gradually lifting themselves, as they come round in their gyrations, higher and higher, and floating toward the southeast. Slender dark motes they are at last, but every time they come round eastward, I see the light of the westering sun reflected from the under sides of their wings.

Oct. 9, 1860. Up Assabet. I now see one small red maple which is all a pure yellow within, and a bright red or scarlet on its outer surface and prominences. It is a remarkably distinct painting of scarlet on a yellow ground. It is an indescribably beautiful contrast of scarlet and yellow. Another is yellow and green where this was scarlet and yellow, and in this case, the bright and liquid green, now getting to be rare, is by contrast as charming a color as the scarlet.

I wonder that the very cows and the dogs in the street do not manifest a recognition of the bright tints about and above them. I saw a terrier dog glance up and down the painted street before he turned in at his master's gate, and I wondered what he thought of these lit trees, if they did not touch his philosophy or spirits, but I fear he had only his common dog-gish thoughts after all. He trotted down the yard as if it were a matter of course, or else as if he deserved it all.

For two or more nights past we have had remarkable glittering golden sunsets as I came home from the post-office, it being cold and cloudy just above the horizon. There was the most intensely bright golden light at the west end of the street extending under the elms, and the very dust a quarter of a mile off was like gold dust. I wondered how a child could stand quietly in that light, as if it had been a furnace.

This haste to kill a bird or quadruped, and make a skeleton of it, which many young men and some old men exhibit, reminds me of the fable of the man who killed the hen that laid golden eggs, and so got no more gold. It is a perfectly parallel case. Such is the knowledge you get from anatomy as compared with that you may get from the living creature. Every fowl lays golden eggs for him who can find them, or can detect alloy and base metal.

Oct. 10, 1851. The air this morning is full of bluebirds, and again it is spring. There are many things to indicate the renewing of spring at this season, the blossoming of spring flowers, not to mention the witch-hazel, the notes of spring birds, the springing of grain and grass and other plants.

Ah, I yearn toward thee, my friend, but I have not confidence in thee. We do not believe in the same God. I am not thou, thou art not I. We trust each other to-day, but we distrust to-morrow. Even when I meet thee unexpectedly, I part from thee with disappointment. Though I enjoy thee more than other men, I am more disappointed with thee than with others. I know a noble man; what is it hinders me from knowing him better? I know not how it is that our distrust, our hate, is stronger than our love. Here I have been on what the world would call friendly terms with one fourteen years, have pleased my imagination sometimes with loving him, and yet our hate is stronger than our love. Why are we related thus unsatisfactorily to each other? We are almost a sore to one another. Ever and anon will come the thought to mar our love, that change the theme but a hair's breadth, and we shall be tragically strange to one another. We do not know what hinders us from coming

together, but when I consider what my friend's relations and acquaintances are, what his tastes and habits, then the difference between us gets named. I see that all these friends and acquaintances and tastes and habits are indeed my friend's self.

The witch-hazel loves a hillside with or without wood or shrubs. It is always pleasant to come upon it unexpectedly as you are threading the woods in such places. Methinks I attribute to it some elfish quality apart from its fame. I love to behold its gray speckled stems. The leaf first green, then yellow for a short season; then, when it touches the ground, tawny leather-color. As I stood amid the witch-hazels near Flint's Pond, a flock of a dozen chickadees came flitting and singing about me with great ado, a most cheering and enlivening sound, with incessant *day-day-day*, and a fine wiry strain, between whiles, flitting ever nearer and nearer inquisitively, till the boldest was within five feet of me; then suddenly, their curiosity sated, they flitted by degrees farther away, disappeared, and I heard with regret their retreating *day-day-days*.

Oct. 10, 1857. This is the end of the sixth day of glorious weather, which I am tempted to call the finest in the year, so bright and serene the air, such a sheen from the earth, so brilliant

the foliage, so pleasantly warm (except perhaps this day, which is cooler), too warm for a thick coat, yet not sultry nor oppressive, so ripe the season and our thoughts. Certainly these are the most *brilliant* days in the year, ushered in perhaps by a frosty morning, as this. As a dewy morning in summer, compared with a parched and sultry, languid one, so a frosty morning at this season compared with a merely dry or foggy one. These days you may say the year is ripened like a fruit by frost, and puts on the brilliant tints of maturity, but not yet the color of decay. It is not sere and withered as in November.

Oct. 10, 1858. The simplest and most lumpish fungus has a peculiar interest for us, compared with a mere mass of earth, because it is so obviously organic and related to ourselves, however remote. It is the expression of an idea, growth according to a law, matter not dormant, not raw, but inspired, appropriated by spirit. If I take up a handful of earth, however separately interesting the particles may be, their relation to one another appears to be that of mere juxtaposition generally. I might have thrown them together thus. But the humblest fungus betrays a life akin to my own. It is a successful poem in its kind. There is suggested something superior to any particle of matter in the idea or mind which uses and arranges the particles.

I find the fringed gentian abundantly open at three and at four P. M. (in fact it must be all the afternoon), open to catch the cool October sun and air in its low position. Such a dark blue! surpassing that of the male bluebird's back.

Oct. 10, 1860. I see dumb-bells in the minister's study, and some of their dumbness gets into his sermons. Some travelers carry them round the world in their carpet bags. Can he be said to travel who requires still this exercise? A party of school-children had a picnic in the Easterbrooks Country the other day, and they carried bags of beans for their gymnasium, to exercise with there. I cannot be interested in these extremely artificial amusements. The traveler is no longer a wayfarer with his staff and pack and dusty coat. He is not a pilgrim, but he travels in a saloon, and carries dumb-bells to exercise with in the intervals of his journey.

Oct. 11, 1840. It is always easy to infringe the law, but the Bedouin of the desert finds it impossible to resist public opinion.

Oct. 11, 1852. The chestnut leaves already rustle with a great noise as you walk through the woods, lying light, firm and crisp. Now the chestnuts are rattling out. The burrs are gaping and showing the plump nuts. They fill the ruts in the road and are abundant amid the fallen

leaves in the midst of the wood. The jays scream and the red squirrels scold while you are clubbing and shaking the trees. Now it is true autumn, and all things are crisp and ripe.

I observed the other day that those insects whose ripple I could see from the peak were water bugs. I could detect the progress of a water bug over the smooth surface in almost any part of the pond, for they furrow the water slightly, making a conspicuous ripple, bounded by two diverging lines, but the skaters slide over it without producing a perceptible ripple. In this clear air and with this glassy surface, the motion of every water bug, here and there amid the skaters, was perceptible.

Oct. 11, 1859. The note of the chickadee heard now in cooler weather above many fallen leaves, has a new significance.

There was a very severe frost this morning; ground stiffened, probably a chestnut-opening frost, a season-ripener, opener of the burrs that contain the Indian Summer. Such is the cold of early or mid October. The leaves and weeds had a stiff, hoary appearance.

Oct. 11, 1860. Pears are a less poetic though more aristocratic fruit than apples. They have neither the beauty nor the fragrance of apples, but their excellence is in their flavor, which speaks to a grosser sense, they are *glout-mor-*

ceaux; hence while children dream of apples, judges, ex-judges, and honorables are connoisseurs of pears, and discourse of them at length between sessions. How much more attention they get from the proprietor. The hired man gathers the apples and barrels them. The proprietor plucks the pears at odd hours for a pastime. They are spread on the floor of the best room, they are a gift to the most distinguished guest. They are named after emperors, kings, queens, dukes, and duchesses. I fear I shall have to wait till we get to pears with American names, which a republican can swallow.

Oct. 12, 1840. The springs of life flow in ceaseless tides down below, and hence this greenness everywhere on the surface. But they are as yet untapped; only here and there men have sunk a well.

Oct. 12, 1851. I love very well this cloudy afternoon, so sober and favorable to reflection, after so many bright ones. What if the clouds shut out the heavens, provided they concentrate my thoughts and make a more celestial heaven below! I hear the crickets plainer. I wander less in my thoughts, am less dissipated, am aware how shallow was the current of my thoughts before. Deep streams are dark, as if there were a cloud in their sky; shallow ones are bright and sparkling, reflecting the sun from

their bottoms. The very wind on my cheek seems more fraught with meaning.

I seem to be more constantly merged in nature, my intellectual life is more obedient to nature than formerly, but perchance less obedient to spirit. I have less memorable seasons. I exact less of myself. I am getting used to my meanness, getting to accept my low estate. Oh, if I could be discontented with myself! if I could feel anguish at each descent!

P. M. To Cliffs. I hear Lincoln bell tolling for church. At first I thought of the telegraph harp. Heard at a distance, the sound of a bell acquires a certain vibratory hum, as it were from the air through which it passes, like a harp. All music is a harp music at length, as if the air were full of vibrating strings. It is not the mere sound of the bell, but the humming in the air that enchants me, just as the azure tint which much air or distance imparts, delights the eye. It is not so much the object, as the object clothed with an azure veil. All sound heard at a great distance thus tends to produce the same music, vibrating the strings of the universal lyre. There comes to me a melody which the air has strained, which has conversed with every leaf and needle of the woods. It is by no means the sound of the bell as heard near at hand, and which at this dis-

tance I can plainly distinguish, but its vibrating echoes, that portion of the sound which the elements take up and modulate, a sound which is very much modified, sifted, and refined before it reaches my ear. The echo is to some extent an independent sound, and therein is the magic and charm of it. It is not merely a repetition of my voice, but it is in some measure the voice of the wood.

Oct. 12, 1852. I am struck by the simplicity of light in the atmosphere in the autumn, as if the earth absorbed none, and out of this profusion of dazzling light came the autumnal tints. Can it be because there is less vapor?

The delicacy of the stratification in the white sand by the railroad, where they have been getting out sand for the brickyards, the delicate stratification of this great globe, like the leaves of the choicest volume just shut on a lady's table! The piled up history! I am struck by the slow and delicate process by which the globe was formed.

What an ample share of the light of heaven each pond and lake on the surface of the globe enjoys! No woods are so dark and deep but it is light above the pond. Its window or skylight is as broad as its surface. It lies out, patent to the sky. From the mountain top you may not be able to see out, because of the woods, but on the lake you are bathed in light.

Oct. 12, 1857. The elm, I think, can be distinguished farther than any other tree, and however faintly seen in the distant horizon, its little dark dome, which the thickness of my nail will conceal, apparently not so big as the prominence on an orange, suggests ever the same quiet, rural and domestic life passing beneath it. It is like the vignette to an unseen idyllic poem. Though the little prominence appears so dark here, I know that it is now a rich brownish or yellow canopy of rustling leaves, whose harvest time has already come, sending down its showers from time to time. Homestead telegraphs to homestead through these distant elms seen from the hilltops. I fancy I hear the house dog bark, and lowing of the cows asking admittance to their yard beneath it. The tea-table is spread. The master and the hired men in their shirt-sleeves, with the mistress, have just sat down.

Oct. 12, 1858. I have heard of judges accidentally met at an evening party, discussing the efficacy of laws and courts, and deciding that with the aid of the jury system substantial justice was done. But taking those cases in which honest men refrain from going to law, together with those in which men honest and dishonest do go to law, I think the law is really a humbug, and a benefit principally to the lawyers. This town has made a law recently against cattle

going at large, and assigned a penalty of five dollars. I am troubled by an Irish neighbor's cow and horse, and have threatened to have them put in the pound. But a lawyer tells me these town laws are hard to put through, there are so many quibbles. He never knew the complainant to get his case, if the defendant had a mind to contend. However, the cattle were kept out several days, till a Sunday came, and then they were all in my grounds again, as I heard, but all my neighbors tell me that I cannot have them impounded on that day. Indeed, I observe that very many of my neighbors do for this reason regularly turn their cattle loose on Sundays. The judges may discuss the question of the courts and law over their nuts and raisins, and mumble for the decision that "substantial justice is done," but I must believe they mean that they really get paid a "substantial" salary.

Oct. 13, 1840. The only prayer for a brave man is to be a-doing. This is the prayer that is heard. Why ask God for a respite when he has not given it? Has he not done his work, and made man equal to his occasions, but he must needs have recourse to him again? God cannot give us any other than self-help.

The workers in stone polish only their chimney ornaments. But their pyramids are roughly done. There is a soberness in a rough aspect,

in unhewn granite, which addresses a depth in us, but the polished surface only hits the ball of the eye.

The draft of my stove sounds like the dashing of waves on the shore, and the lid sings like the wind in the shrouds. The steady roar of the surf on the beach is as incessant in my ear as in the shell on the mantelpiece. I see vessels stranded, and gulls flying, and fishermen running to and fro on the beach.

Oct. 13, 1851. The alert and energetic man leads a more intellectual life in winter than in summer. In summer the animal and vegetable in him flourish more, as in a torrid zone; he lives in his senses mainly. In winter cold reason, not warm passion, has sway; he lives in thought and reflection. If he has passed a merely sensual summer, he passes his winter in a torpid state like some reptiles and other animals. Man depends more on himself, his own resources, in winter, less on what is outward. Insects disappear for the most part, and those animals which depend upon them, but the nobler animals abide with man the severity of winter. He migrates into his mind, to perpetual summer, and to the healthy man the winter of his discontent never comes.

Oct. 13, 1852. P. M. To Cliffs. Fair Haven Pond never, I think, looks so handsome as at

this season. It is a sufficiently clear and warm, a rather Indian summer day, and they are gathering the apples in the orchard. The warmth is required now, and we welcome and appreciate it all. The shrub-oak plain is a deep red with grayish, withered, apparently white-oak leaves intermixed. The chickadee takes heart too, and sings above these warm rocks. Birches, hickories, aspens, etc., are like innumerable small flames on the hillsides about the pond, which is now most beautifully framed with the autumn-tinted woods and hills. The water or lake, from however distant a point seen, is always the centre of the landscape. Fair Haven lies more open, and can be seen from more distant points than any other of our ponds. The air is singularly fine-grained, the sward looks short and firm. The mountains are more distinct from the rest of the earth and slightly impurpled, seeming to lie up more. How peaceful great nature! There is no disturbing sound, but far amid the western hills there rises a pure, white smoke in constant volumes.

Oct. 13, 1857. To Poplar Hill. Maple fires are burnt out generally, and look smoky in the swamps. When my eyes were resting on those smoke-like bare trees, it did not at first occur to me why the landscape was not as brilliant as a few days ago. The outside trees in the swamps lose their leaves first.

I see a pretty large flock of tree sparrows, very lively and tame, pursuing each other and drifting along a bushy fence and ditch like driving snow. Two pursuing each other would curl upward like a breaker in the air, and drop into the hedge again. This has been the ninth of these wonderful days, and one of the warmest. I am obliged to sit with my window wide open all the evening as well as all day. It is the earlier Indian summer.

Oct. 13, 1859. The shad bush is leafing again by the sunny swamp side. It is like a youthful or poetic thought in old age. Several times I have been cheered by this sight when surveying in former years. The chickadee seems to lisp a sweeter note at the sight of it. I would not fear the winter more than the shad bush, which puts forth fresh and tender leaves on its approach. In the fall I will take this for my coat of arms. It seems to detain the sun that expands it. These twigs are so full of life that they can hardly contain themselves. They ignore winter. They anticipate spring. What faith! Away in some sheltered recess of the swamp you find where these leaves have expanded. In my latter years let me have some shad-bush thoughts.

I perceive the peculiar scent of witch hazel in bloom for several rods around, which at first I refer to the decaying leaves.

British naturalists very generally apologize to the reader for having devoted their attention to natural history to the neglect of some important duty.

I remember seeing in an old work a plate of a fungus which grew in a wine-cellar and got its name from that circumstance. It is related in "Chambers' Journal" that Sir Joseph Banks, having ordered a cask of wine to be placed in a cellar in order to improve it, "at the end of three years he directed his butler to ascertain the state of the wine, when on attempting to open the cellar door, he could not effect it in consequence of some powerful obstacle. The door was consequently cut down, when the cellar was found to be completely filled with a fungus production so firm that it was necessary to use an axe for its removal. This appeared to have grown from, or to have been nourished by the decomposing particles of the wine, the cask being empty and carried up to the ceiling, where it was supported by the fungus." Perhaps it was well that the fungus instead of Sir Joseph Banks drank up the wine. The life of a wine-bibber is like that of a fungus.

Oct. 13, 1860. The scientific differs from the poetic or lively description somewhat as the photographs which we become so weary of viewing differ from paintings and sketches, though

the comparison is too favorable to science. All science is only a makeshift, a means to an end which is never attained. After all, the truest description and that by which another living man can most readily recognize a flower, is the unmeasured and eloquent one which the sight of it inspires. No scientific description will supply the want of this, though you should count and measure and analyze every atom which seems to compose it. Surely poetry and eloquence are a more universal language than that Latin which is confessedly dead. In science I should say all description is postponed till we know the whole, and then science itself will be cast aside. But unconsidered expressions of delight which any natural object draws from us are something complete and final in themselves, since all nature is to be regarded as it concerns man, and who knows how near to absolute truth such unconscious affirmations may come. Which are the truest, the sublime conceptions of Hebrew poets and seers, or the guarded statements of modern geologists which we must modify or unlearn so fast? A scientific description is such as you would get, if you should send out the scholars of the polytechnic school with all sorts of metres made and patented to take the measure for you of any natural object. In a sense, you have got nothing new thus, for every object that

we see mechanically is mechanically daguerreotyped on our eyes, but a true description growing out of the perception and appreciation of it is itself a new fact, never to be daguerreotyped, indicating the highest quality of the object, its relation to man. The one description interests those chiefly who have not seen the thing, the other chiefly interests those who have seen it and are most familiar with it, and brings it home to the reader. We like to read a good description of nothing so well as of that which we already know the best, as our friend or ourselves even.

Gerard has not only heard of and seen and raised a plant, but smelled and tasted it, applied all his senses to it. You are not distracted from the thing to the system or arrangement. In the true natural order, the order or system is not insisted on. Each is first, and each last. That which presents itself to us this moment occupies the whole of the present and rests on the very topmost point of the sphere, under the zenith. The species and individuals of all the natural kingdoms ask our attention and admiration in a round robin. We make straight lines, putting a captain at the head and a lieutenant at the tail, with sergeants and corporals all along the line, and a flourish of trumpets at the beginning, where nature has made curves to which

belong their own sphere music. It is indispensable for us to square her circles, and we offer our rewards to him who will do it. The best observer describes the most familiar object with a zest and vividness of imagery as if he saw it for the first time, the novelty consisting not in the strangeness of the object, but in the new and clearer perception of it.

Oct. 14, 1851. Down the railroad before sunrise. A freight train in the Deep Cut. When the vapor from the engine rose above the woods, the level rays of the rising sun falling on it presented the same redness, morning red inclining to saffron, which the clouds in the western horizon do.

There was but little wind this morning, yet I heard the telegraph harp. It does not require a strong wind to wake its strings. It depends more on its direction and the tension of the wire apparently. A gentle but steady breeze will often call forth its finest strains, when a strong but unsteady gale, blowing at the wrong angle withal, will fail to elicit any melodious sound.

In the psychological world, there are phenomena analogous to what zoölogists call *alternate reproduction*, in which it requires several generations unlike each other to evolve the perfect animal. Some men's lives are but an aspiration, a yearning toward a higher state, and they

are wholly misapprehended until they are referred to or traced through all their metamorphoses. We cannot pronounce upon a man's intellectual and moral state until we foresee what metamorphosis it is preparing him for.

Oct. 14, 1856. Any flowers seen now may be called late ones. I see perfectly fresh succory, not to speak of yarrow, a *Viola ovata*, some *Polygala sanguinea*, autumnal dandelion, tansy, etc.

Oct. 14, 1857. P. M. To White Pond. Another, the tenth or eleventh of these memorable days. This afternoon it is warmer even than yesterday. I am glad to reach the shade of Hubbard's Grove. The coolness is refreshing. It is indeed a golden autumn. All kinds of crudities have a chance to get ripe this year. Was there ever such an autumn? And yet there was never such a panic and hard times in the commercial world. The merchants and banks are failing all the country over, but not the sand banks, solid and warm, and streaked with bloody blackberry vines. You may run on them as much as you please, even as the crickets do, and find their account in it. They are the stockholders in these banks, and I hear them creaking their content. You may see them on change in any warmer hour. In these banks, too, and such as these, are my funds deposited, funds of health and enjoyment. Invest in these

country banks. Let your capital be simplicity and contentment. I do not suspect the solvency of these banks. I know who is the president and cashier.

I take these walks to every point of the compass, and it is always harvest time with me. I am always gathering my crop from these woods and fields and waters, and no man is in my way, or interferes with me. My crop is not their crop. To-day I see them getting in their beans and corn, and they are a spectacle to me, but are soon out of my sight. I go abroad over the land each day to get the best I can find, and that is never carted off, even to the last day of November.

Sat in the old pasture beyond the Corner Spring woods to look at that pine wood now at the height of its change, pitch and white. Their change produces a very singular and pleasing effect. They are regularly parti-colored. The last year's leaves about a foot beneath the extremities of the twigs on all sides, now changed and ready to fall, have their period of brightness as well as broader leaves. They are a clear yellow, contrasting with the fresh and liquid green of the terminal plumes, or this year's leaves. These quite distinct colors are regularly and equally distributed over the whole tree. You have the warmth of the yellow and

the coolness of the green. So it should be with our own maturity, not yellow to the very extremity of our shoots, but youthful and untried green ever putting forth afresh at the extremities, foretelling a maturity as yet unknown. The ripe leaves fall to the ground, and become nutriment for the green ones which still aspire to heaven. In the fall of the leaf there is no fruit, there is no true maturity, neither in our science and wisdom.

Oct. 14, 1859. To and around Flint's Pond with Blake. A fine Indian-summer day. We sit on the rock on Pine Hill overlooking Walden. There is a thick haze almost concealing the mountains. There is wind enough to raise waves on the pond and make it bluer. What strikes me in the scenery here now is the contrast of the universally blue water with the brilliant tinted woods around it. The tints generally may be about at their height. The earth appears like a great inverted shield painted yellow and red, or with imbricated scales of those colors, and a blue navel in the middle where the pond lies, with a distant circumference of whitish haze. The nearer woods where chestnuts grow are a mass of warm glowing yellow, but on other sides the red and yellow are intermixed.

I hear a man laughed at because he went to Europe twice in search of an imaginary wife

who he thought was there, though he had never seen nor heard of her. But the majority have gone further while they stayed in America, have actually allied themselves to one whom they thought their wife, and found out their mistake too late to mend it. It would be cruel to laugh at them.

Oct. 15, 1840. Men see God in the ripple, but not in miles of still water. Of all the two thousand miles that the St. Lawrence flows, pilgrims go only to Niagara.

Oct. 15, 1851. 8.30 A. M. Up the river in a boat to Pelham's Pond with W. E. C. The muskrat houses appear now, for the most part, to be finished, though some are still rising. They line the river all the way. Some are as big as small haycocks. There is a wind, and the sky is full of flitting clouds, so that sky and water are quite unlike what they were that warm, bright, transparent day when I last sailed on the river and the surface was of such oily smoothness. You could not now study the river bottom for the black waves and the streaks of foam. It is pleasant to hear the sound of the waves, and feel the surging of the boat, inspiriting, as if you were bound on adventures. It is delightful to be tossed about in such a harmless storm, and see the waves look so angry and black. We see objects on shore, trees, etc.,

much better from the boat. From a low and novel point of view, it brings them against the sky, and what is low on the meadow is conspicuous as well as the hills. In this cool sunlight, Fair Haven Hill shows to advantage. Every rock and shrub and protuberance has justice done it, the sun shining at an angle on the hills and giving each a shadow. The hills have a hard and distinct outline, and I see into their very texture. On Fair Haven I see the sunlit light green grass in the hollows where the snow makes pools of water sometimes, and the sunlit russet slopes. Cut three white-pine boughs opposite Fair Haven, and set them up in the bow of our boat for a sail. It was pleasant to hear the water begin to ripple under the prow, telling of our easy progress, and thus without a tack we made the south side of Fair Haven. Then we threw our sails overboard, and the moment after mistook them for green bushes or weeds which had sprung from the bottom unusually far from shore. Then to hear the wind sough in your sail, that is to be a sailor and hear a land sound. . . . On the return . . . the sun sets when we are off Israel Rice's. A few golden coppery clouds glow intensely like fishes in some molten metal of the sky, then the small scattered clouds grow blue-black above, or one half, and reddish or pink the other half, and after a short

twilight the night sets in. The reflections of the stars in the water are dim and elongated like the zodiacal light, straight down into the depths. We row across Fair Haven in the thickening twilight and far below it, steadily and without speaking. As the night draws on her veil, the shores retreat, we only keep in the middle of this low stream of light, we know not whether we float in the air or in the lower regions. It is pleasant not to get home till after dark, to steer by the lights of the villagers.

The lamps in the houses twinkle now like stars; they shine doubly bright. We rowed about twenty-four miles going and coming. In a straight line it would be fifteen and a half.

Oct. 15, 1852. 9 A. M. The first snow is falling (after not very cool weather) in large flakes, filling the air and obscuring the distant woods and houses, as if the inhabitants above were emptying their pillow-cases. Like a mist it divides the uneven landscape at a little distance into ridges and vales. The ground begins to whiten and our thoughts to prepare for winter. White-weed. The Canada snapdragon is one of the latest flowers noticed, a few buds being still left to blossom at the top of its spike or raceme. The snow lasted but half an hour.

How Father Le Jeune (?) pestered the poor Indians with his God at every turn (they must

have thought it his one idea), only getting their attention when they required some external aid to save them from starving. Then indeed they were good Christians.

Oct. 15, 1858. If you stand fronting a hillside covered with a variety of young oaks, the brightest scarlet ones — uniformly deep, dark scarlet — will be the scarlet oaks. The next most uniformly reddish, a peculiar dull crimson (or salmon?), are the white oaks. Then the large-leaved and variously tinted red oaks, scarlet, yellow, and green, and finally the yellowish and half-decayed brown leaves of the black oak.

Oct. 15, 1859. The chickadees sing as if at home. Theirs is an honest, heartfelt melody. Shall not the voice of man express as much content as the note of a bird?

Oct. 16, 1857. P. M. Up Assabet. I stop a while at Cheney's shore to hear an incessant musical twittering from a large flock of young goldfinches which have dull yellow, drab and black plumage. Young birds can hardly restrain themselves, and, if they did not leave us, might perchance burst forth into song in the later Indian-summer days. Am surprised to find an abundance of witch hazel now at the height of its change. The tallest bushes are bare, though in bloom; but the lowest are full of leaves, many of them green, but chiefly clear and hand-

some yellow of various shades, from a pale lemon in the shade or within the bush, to a darker and warmer yellow without. Some have even a hue of crimson; some are green with bright yellow along the veins. This reminds me that plants exposed turn early, or not at all, while the same species in the shade of the woods at a much later date assume very pure and delicate tints.

A great part of the pine needles have just fallen. See the pale brown carpet of them under this pine; how light it lies up on the grass, and that great rock, and the wall, resting thick on its top and its shelves, and on the bushes and underwood. The needles are not yet flat and reddish, but a more delicate pale brown, and lie up light on joggle-sticks, just dropped. The ground is nearly concealed by them. How beautifully they die, making cheerfully their annual contribution to the soil. They fall to rise again; as if they knew that it was not one annual deposit alone that made this rich mould in which pine-trees grow. They live in the soil whose fertility and bulk they increase, and in the forests that spring from it.

Oct. 16, 1859. P. M. Paddle to Puffer's, and thence walk to Ledum Swamp and Conantward. A cold, clear Novemberish day. When I get to Willow Bay, I see the new muskrat

houses erected, conspicuous on the now nearly leafless shores. For thirty years I have annually observed, about this time or earlier, the freshly erected winter lodges of the muskrat along the river-side, reminding us that, if we have no gypsies, we have a more indigenous race of puny, quadrupedal men maintaining their ground in our midst still. This may not be an annual phenomenon to you, but it has an important place in my Kalendar. So surely as the sun appears to be in Libra or Scorpio, I see the conical winter lodges of the muskrat rising above the withered pontederia and flags. There will be some reference to it by way of parable or otherwise in *my* New Testament. Surely it is a defect in our Bible that it is not truly ours, but a Hebrew Bible. The most pertinent illustrations for us are to be drawn not from Egypt or Babylonia, but from New England. Natural objects and phenomena are the original symbols or types which express our thoughts and feelings. Yet American scholars, having little or no root in the soil, commonly strive with all their might to confine themselves to the imported symbols alone. All the true growth and experience, the living speech, they would fain reject as "Americanisms." It is the old error which the church, the state, the school, ever commit, choosing darkness rather than light, holding fast to the old and to

tradition. When I really know that our river pursues a serpentine course to the Merrimack, shall I continue to describe it by referring to some other river, no older than itself, which is like it, and call it a meander? It is no more meandering than the Meander is musketaquiding.

This clear, cold, Novemberish light is inspiriting. Some twigs which are bare, and weeds, begin to glitter with hoary light. The very edge or outline of a tawny or russet hill has this hoary light on it. Your thoughts sparkle like the water surface and the downy twigs. From the shore you look back on the silver-plated river.

Every rain exposes new arrow-heads. We stop at Clamshell, and dabble for a moment in the relics of a departed race.

When we emerged from the pleasant footpath through the birches at Witherel Glade, the glittering white tufts of the *Andropogon scoparius* lit up by the sun were affectingly fair and cheering to behold. How cheerful these cold, but bright, white waving tufts! They reflect all the sun's light without a particle of his heat, as yellow rays. A thousand such tufts now catch up the sun, and send to us its light, but not heat. Light without heat is getting to be the prevailing phenomenon of the day now.

This cold refines and condenses us. Our

spirits are strong, like that pint of cider in the middle of a frozen barrel.

The cool, placid, silver-plated waters at even coolly await the frost. The muskrat is steadily adding to his winter lodge. There is no need of adding a peculiar instinct telling him how high to build his cabin. He has had a longer experience in this river valley than we.

I love to get out of cultivated fields, where I walk on an imported sod or English grass, and walk on the fine sedge of woodland hollows, on an American sward. In the former case my thoughts are heavy and lumpish, as if I fed on turnips. In the other, I nibble ground nuts.

Oct. 17, 1840. In the presence of my friend I am ashamed of my fingers and toes. I have no feature so fair as my love for him. There is a more than maiden modesty between us. I find myself more simple and sincere than in my most private moment to myself. I am literally true *with a witness*. We should sooner blot out the sun than disturb friendship.

Oct. 17, 1850. I observed to-day the small blueberry bushes by the pathside, now blood-red, full of white blossoms, as in the spring. The blossoms of spring contrast strangely with the leaves of autumn. The former seemed to have expanded from sympathy with the maturity of the leaves.

Oct. 17, 1856. Many fringed gentians quite fresh yet, though most are faded and withered. I suspect that their very early and sudden fading and withering has nothing or little to do with frost after all, for why should so many fresh ones succeed still?

As I stood looking, I heard a smart *tche-day-day-day* close to my ear, and looking up saw four or five chickadees which had come to scrape acquaintance with me, hopping amid the alders within three or four feet of me. I had heard them further off at first, and they had followed me along the hedge. They *day-day*'d, and lisped their faint notes alternately, and then, as if to make me think they had some other errand than to peer at me, they pecked the dead twigs, the little top-heavy, black-crowned, volatile fellows.

Oct. 17, 1857. What a new beauty the blue of the river acquires seen at a distance in the midst of the variously tinted woods, great masses of gray, yellow, etc.! It appears as color which ordinarily it does not, elysian.

The trainers are out with their band of music, and I find my account in it, though I have not subscribed for it. I am walking with a hill between me and the soldiers. I think perhaps it will be worth while to keep within hearing of their strains this afternoon. Yet I hesitate. I

am wont to find music unprofitable, a luxury. It is surprising, however, that so few habitually intoxicate themselves with music, so many with alcohol. I think, perchance, I may risk it, it will whet my senses so, it will reveal a glory where none was seen before. No doubt these strains do sometimes suggest to Abner, walking behind in his red-streaked pants, an ideal which he had lost sight of or never perceived. It is remarkable that our institutions can stand before music, it is so revolutionary.

Oct. 17, 1858. I think the reflections are never purer and more distinct than now at the season of the fall of the leaf, just before the cool twilight has come, when the air has a finer grain, just as our mental reflections are more distinct at this season of the year when the evenings grow cool and lengthen, and our winter evenings with their brighter fires may be said to begin. One reason why I associate perfect reflections from still water with this and a later season may be that now by the fall of the leaves so much more light is let in to the water. The river reflects more light, therefore, in this twilight of the year, as it were, an afterglow.

Oct. 17, 1859. What I put into my pocket, whether berry or apple, generally has to keep company with an arrow-head or two. I hear the latter chinking against a key as I walk. These

are the perennial crop of Concord fields. If they were sure it would pay, we should see farmers raking the fields for them.

Oct. 17, 1860. While the man that killed my lynx thinks, as do many others, that it came out of a menagerie, and the naturalists call it the Canada lynx, and at the White Mountains they call it the Siberian lynx, in each case forgetting or ignoring the fact that it belongs here, I call it the Concord lynx.

Oct. 18, 1840. The era of greatest change is to the subject of it the condition of greatest invariableness. The longer the lever, the less perceptible its motion. It is the slowest pulsation which is the most vital. I am independent of the change I detect. My most essential progress must be to me a state of absolute rest. So in geology we are nearest to discovering the true causes of the revolutions of the globe, when we allow them to consist with a quiescent state of the elements. We discover the causes of all past change in the present invariable order of the universe. The pulsations are so long that in the interval there is almost a stagnation of life. The first cause of the universe makes the least noise. Its pulse has beat but once, is now beating. The greatest appreciable revolutions are the work of the light-footed air, the stealthy-paced water, and the subterranean fire. The

wind makes the desert without a rustle. To every being, consequently, its own first cause is an invisible and inconceivable agent.

Some questions which are put to me are as if I should ask a bird what she will do when her nest is built, and her brood reared.

I cannot make a disclosure. You should see my secret. Let me open my doors never so wide, still within and behind them, where it is unopened, does the sun rise and set, and day and night alternate. No fruit will ripen on the common.

Oct. 18, 1855. How much beauty in decay! I pick up a white-oak leaf, dry and stiff, but yet mingled red and green, October-like, whose pulpy part some insect has eaten, beneath, exposing the delicate network of its veins. It is very beautiful held up to the light; such work as only an insect eye could perform. Yet, perchance, to the vegetable kingdom, such a revelation of ribs is as repulsive as the skeleton in the animal kingdom. In each case, it is some little gourmand working for another end, that reveals the wonders of nature. There are countless oak leaves in this condition now, and also with a submarginal line of network exposed.

Oct. 18, 1856. Rain all night and half this day. P. M. A-chestnutting, down turnpike and across to Britton's. It is a rich sight, that of

a large chestnut tree, with a dome-shaped top, where the yellow leaves have been thinned out (for most now strew the ground evenly as a carpet throughout the chestnut woods, and so save some seed), all richly rough with great brown burrs which are opened into several segments, so as to show the wholesome-colored nuts peeping forth, ready to fall on the slightest jar. The individual nuts are very interesting, and of various forms, according to the season and the number in a burr. They are a pretty fruit, thus compactly stowed away in their bristly chest. Three is the regular number, and there is no room to spare. The two outside nuts have each one convex side without, and one flat side within. The middle nut has two flat sides. Sometimes there are several more in a burr, but this year the burrs are small, and there are not commonly more than two good nuts, very often only one, the middle one, both sides of which will then be convex, each bulging out into a thin, abortive, mere reminiscence of a nut, all shell, beyond it. The base of each nut, where it was joined to the burr, is marked with an irregular dark figure on a light ground, oblong or crescent-shaped, commonly like a spider or other insect with a dozen legs, while the upper or small end tapers into a little white woolly spire crowned with a star, and the whole upper slopes of the nuts are covered

with the same hoary wool which reminds you of the frosts on whose advent they peep forth. Within this thick, prickly burr, the nuts are about as safe, until they are quite mature, as a porcupine behind its spines. Yet I see where the squirrels have gnawed through many closed burrs, and left the pieces on the stumps. There are sometimes two meats within one chestnut shell, divided transversely, and each covered by its separate brown-ribbed skin, as if nature had smuggled the seed of one more tree into this chest.

Men commonly exaggerate the theme. Some themes they think are significant, and others insignificant. I feel that my life is very homely, my pleasures very cheap; joy and sorrow, success and failure, grandeur and meanness, and indeed most words in the English language, do not mean for me what they do for my neighbors. I see that they look with compassion on me, that they think it is a mean and unfortunate destiny which makes me walk in these fields and woods so much, and sail on this river alone. But so long as I find here the only real elysium, I cannot hesitate in my choice. My work is writing, and I do not hesitate, though no subject is too trivial for me, tried by the ordinary standards. The theme is nothing, the life is everything. All that interests the reader is the depth and intensity of the life exerted. We touch our

subject but by a point which has no breadth, but the pyramid of our experience, our interest in it, rests on us by a broader or narrower base; that is, man is all in all, nature nothing but as she draws him out and reflects him. Give me simple, cheap, and homely themes.

Oct. 18, 1859. Why can we not oftener refresh one another with original thoughts? If the fragrance of the Dicksonia fern is so grateful and suggestive to us, how much more refreshing and encouraging, re-creating, would be fresh and fragrant thoughts communicated to us from a man's experience. I want none of his pity nor sympathy in the common sense, but that he should emit and communicate to me his essential fragrance, that he should not be forever repenting and going to church (when not otherwise sinning), but as it were going a-huckleberrying in the fields of thought, and enriching all the world with his visions and his joys.

Why flee so soon to the theatres, lecture-rooms, and museums of the city? If you will stay here awhile, I will promise you strange sights. You shall walk on water. All these brooks and rivers and ponds shall be your highway. You shall see the whole earth covered a foot or more deep with purest white crystals in which you slump or over which you glide, and all the trees and stubble glittering in icy armor

Oct. 19, 1840. My friend dwells in the eastern horizon as rich as an eastern city there. There he sails all lonely under the edge of the sky; but thoughts go out silently from me, and belay him, till at length he rides in my roadstead. But never does he fairly come to anchor in my harbor. Perhaps I afford no good anchorage. He seems to move in a burnished atmosphere, while I peer in upon him from surrounding spaces of Cimmerian darkness. His house is incandescent to my eye, while I have no house, but only a neighborhood to his.

Oct. 19, 1855. Talking with Bellew [?] this evening about Fourierism and communities, I said that I suspected any enterprise in which two were engaged together. But, said he, it is difficult to make a stick stand, unless you slant two or more against it. Oh, no, I answered, you may split its lower end into three, or drive it single into the ground, which is the best way, but men, when they start on a new enterprise, not only figuratively, but really, *pull up stakes.* When the sticks prop one another, none, or only one, stands erect.

Oct. 19, 1856. P. M. Conantum. Now and for some weeks is the time for flocks of sparrows of various kinds flitting from bush to bush and tree to tree (and both bushes and trees are thinly leaved or bare), and from one seared

meadow to another. They are mingled together and their notes even, being faint, are, as well as their colors and motions, much alike. The sparrow youth are on the wing. They are still further concealed by their resemblance in color to the gray twigs and stems which are now beginning to be bare.

I have often noticed the inquisitiveness of birds, as the other day of a sparrow, whose motions I should not have supposed had any reference to me, if I had not watched it from first to last. I stood on the edge of a pine and birch wood. It flitted from seven or eight rods distant to a pine within a rod of me, where it hopped about stealthily and chirped awhile, then flew as many rods the other side, and hopped about there awhile, then back to the pine again, as near to me as it dared, and again to its first position, very restless all the while. Generally I should have supposed that there was more than one bird, or that it was altogether accidental, that the chipping of this sparrow had no reference to me, for I could see nothing peculiar about it. But when I brought my glass to bear on it, I found that it was almost steadily eyeing me, and was all alive with excitement.

Oct. 19, 1858. A remarkably warm day. 74°+ at 1 P. M. Ride to Sam Barrett's mill. Am pleased again to see the cobweb drapery of

the mill. Each fine line, hanging in festoons from the timbers overhead, and on the sides, and on the discarded machinery lying about, is covered and greatly enlarged by a coating of meal, like the twigs under thin ridges of snow in winter. It is like the tassels and dimity in a lady's bed-chamber, and I pray that the cobwebs may not have been brushed away from the mill which I visit. It is as if I were aboard a man-of-war, and this were the fine rigging, the sails being taken in. All things in the mill wear this drapery, down to the miller's hat and coat. Barrett's apprentice, it seems, makes trays of black birch and of red maple in a dark room under the mill. I was pleased to see the work done here, a wooden tray is so handsome. You could count the circles of growth on the end of the tray, and the dark heart of the tree was seen at each end above, producing a semicircular ornament. It was a satisfaction to be reminded that we may so easily make our own trenchers as well as fill them. To see the tree reappear on the table instead of going to the fire or some equally coarse use is some compensation for having it cut down. I was the more pleased with the sight of these trays, because the tools used were so simple, as they were made by hand, not by machinery. They may make equally good pails with the hand-made ones, and cheaper

as well as faster, at the pail factory, but that interests me less because the man is turned partly into a machine there himself. In the other case, the workman's relation to his work is more poetic. He also shows more dexterity and is more of a man. You come away from the great factory saddened, as if the chief end of man were to make pails; but in the case of the countryman who makes a few by hand rainy days, the relative importance of human life and of pails is preserved, and you come away thinking of the simple and helpful life of the man, and would fain go to making pails yourself. When labor is reduced to turning a crank, it is no longer amusing nor truly profitable. Let the business become very profitable in a pecuniary sense, and so be "driven," as the phrase is, and carried on on a large scale, and the man is sunk in it, while only the pail or tray floats; we are interested in it only in the same way as the proprietor or company is.

Oct. 20, 1840. My friend is the apology for my life. In him are the spaces which my orbit traverses.

There is no quarrel between the good and the bad, but only between the bad and the bad. In the former case there is inconsistency merely, in the latter a vicious consistency.

Men chord sometimes as the flute and the

pumpkin vine, a perfect chord, a harmony, but no melody. They are not of equal fineness of tone. For the most part I find that in another man and myself the keynote is not the same, so that there are no perfect chords in our gamuts. But if we do not chord by whole tones, nevertheless his sharps are sometimes my flats, and so we play some very difficult pieces together, though the sameness at last fatigues the ear. We never rest on a full natural note, but I sacrifice my naturalness, and he his. We play no tune through, only chromatic strains, or trill upon the same note till our ears ache.

Oct. 20, 1852. The clouds have lifted in the northwest, and I see the mountains in sunshine (all the more attractive from the cold I feel here), with a tinge of purple on them, — a cold, but memorable and glorious outline. This is an advantage of mountains in the horizon; they show you fair weather from the midst of foul. Many a man, when I tell him that I have been upon a mountain, asks if I took a glass with me. No doubt I could have seen further with a glass, and particular objects more distinctly; could have counted more meeting-houses; but this has nothing to do with the peculiar beauty and grandeur of the view which an elevated position affords. It was not to see a few particular objects as if they were near at hand, as I had been

accustomed to see them, that I ascended the mountain, but to see an infinite variety far and near, in their relation to each other, thus reduced to a single picture. The facts of science in comparison with poetry are wont to be as vulgar as looking from a mountain with a telescope. It is a counting of meeting-houses.

Oct. 20, 1854. Saw the sun rise from the mountain top [Wachusett]. Soon after sunrise I saw the pyramidal shadow of the mountain reaching quite across the State, its apex resting on the Green or Hoosac mountains, appearing as a deep-blue section of a cone there. It rapidly contracted, and its apex approached the mountain itself. When about three miles distant, the whole conical shadow was very distinct. The shadow of the mountain makes some minutes' difference in the time of sunrise to the inhabitants of Hubbardston, a few miles west.

Oct. 20, 1855. I have collected and split up now quite a pile of driftwood, rails and riders and stems and stumps of trees, perhaps one half or three fourths of a tree. It is more amusing not only to collect this with my boat, and bring it from the river on my back, but to split it also, than it would be to speak to a farmer for a load of wood, and to saw and split that. Each stick I deal with has a history, and I read it as I am handling it, and last of all, I remember my ad-

ventures in getting it, while it is burning in the winter evening. That is the most interesting part of its history. When I am splitting it, I study the effects of water on it, and, if it is a stump, the curiously winding grain by which it separates into so many prongs, how to take advantage of its grain, and split it most easily. I find that a dry oak stump will split most easily in the direction of its diameter, not at right angles with it, or along its circles of growth. I got out some good knees for a boat. Thus one half the value of my wood is enjoyed before it is housed, and the other half is equal to the whole value of an equal quantity of the wood which I buy.

Some of my acquaintances have been wondering why I took all this pains, bringing some nearly three miles by water, and have suggested various reasons for it. I tell them, in my despair of making them understand me, that it is a profound secret, which it has proved, yet I did hint that one reason was that I wanted to get it. I take some satisfaction in eating my food, as well as in being nourished by it. I feel well at dinner time, as well as after it. The world will never find out why you don't love to have your bed tucked up for you, why you will be so perverse. I enjoy more, drinking water at a clear spring, than out of a goblet at a gentleman's

table. I like best the bread which I have baked, the garment which I have made, the shelter I have constructed, the fuel I have gathered. It is always a recommendation to me to know that a man has ever been poor, has been regularly born into this world, knows the language. I require to be assured of certain philosophers that they have once been barefooted, footsore, have eaten a crust because they had nothing better, and know what sweetness resides in it. I have met with some barren accomplished gentlemen who seemed to have been at school all their lives, and never had a vacation to live in. Oh, if they could only have been stolen by the gypsies, and carried far beyond the reach of their guardians! They had better have died in their infancy, and been buried under the leaves, their lips besmeared with blackberries, and cock robin for their sexton.

Oct. 20, 1856. I think that all spiders can walk on water, for when last summer I knocked one off my boat by chance, he ran swiftly back to the boat and climbed up, as if more to avoid the fishes than the water. This would account for those long lines stretched low over the water from one grass-stem to another. I see one of them now, five or six feet long, and only three or four inches above the surface. It is remarkable that there is no perceptible sag to it, weak as the line must be.

Oct. 20, 1857. P. M. To the Easterbrook country. I had gone but little way on the old Carlisle road when I saw Brooks Clark, who is now about eighty, and bent like a bow, hastening along the road, barefooted as usual, with an axe in his hand, in haste perhaps on account of the cold wind on his bare feet. When he got up to me, I saw that beside the axe in one hand, he had his shoes in the other, filled with knurly apples and a dead robin. He stopped and talked with me a few moments; said that we had had a noble autumn and might now expect some cold weather. I asked if he had found the robin dead. No, he said, he found it with its wing broken, and killed it. He also added that he had found some apples in the woods, and as he had not anything to carry them in, he put them in his shoes. They were queer looking trays to carry fruit in. How many he got in along toward the toes, I don't know. I noticed too, that his pockets were stuffed with them. His old frock coat was hanging in strips about the skirts, as were his pantaloons about his naked feet. He appeared to have been out on a scout this gusty afternoon to see what he could find, as the youngest boy might. It pleased me to see this cheery old man, with such a feeble hold on life, bent almost double, thus enjoying the evening of his days. Far be it from me

to call it avarice or penury, this childlike delight in finding something in the woods or fields, and carrying it home in the October evening, as a trophy to be added to his winter's stores. Oh, no, he was happy to be nature's pensioner still, and bird-like to pick up his living. Better his robin than your turkey, his shoes full of apples than your barrels full. They will be sweeter, and suggest a better tale. He can afford to tell how he got them, and I to listen. There is an old wife, too, at home, to share them, and hear how they were obtained; like an old squirrel shuffling to his hole with a nut. Far less pleasing to me the loaded wain, more suggestive of avarice and of spiritual penury. This old man's cheeriness was worth a thousand of the church's sacraments and memento moris. It was better than a prayerful mood. It proves to me old age as tolerable, as happy, as infancy. I was glad of an occasion to suspect that this afternoon he had not been at *work*, but living somewhat after my own fashion (though he did not explain the axe). Had been out to see what nature had for him, and was now hastening home to a burrow he knew of, where he could warm his old feet. If he had been a young man he would probably have thrown away his apples, and put on his shoes for shame when he saw me coming, but old age is manlier. It has

learned to live, makes fewer apologies, like infancy. This seems a very manly man. I have known him within a few years building stone wall by himself, barefooted.

What a wild and rich domain that Easterbrook country! Not a cultivated, hardly a cultivable field in it, and yet it delights all natural persons, and feeds more still. Such great rocky and moist tracts, which daunt the farmer, are reckoned as unimproved land, and therefore worth but little; but think of the miles of huckleberries, and of barberries, and of wild apples, so fair both in flower and fruit, resorted to by men and beasts, Clark, Brown, Melvin, and the robins. There are barberry bushes or clumps there, behind which I could actually pick two bushels of berries without being seen by you on the other side. They are not a quarter picked at last by all creatures together. I walk for two or three miles, and still the clumps of barberries, great sheaves with their wreaths of scarlet fruit, show themselves before me and on every side.

Oct. 21, 1852. To Second Division Brook and Ministerial Swamp. I find caddis-cases with worms in Second Division Brook; and what mean those little piles of yellow sand on dark-colored stones at the bottom of the swift-running water, kept together and in place by

some kind of gluten, and looking as if sprinkled on the stones, one eighteenth of an inch in diameter? These caddis-worms build a little case around themselves, and sometimes attach a few dead leaves to disguise it, and then fasten it slightly to some swaying grass-stem or blade at the bottom in swift water, and these are their quarters till next spring. This reminds me that winter does not put his rude fingers in the bottom of the brooks. When you look into them, you see various dead leaves floating or resting on the bottom, and you do not suspect that some are the disguises which the caddis-worms have borrowed.

Oct. 21, 1857. I see many myrtle birds now about the house, this forenoon, on the advent of cooler weather. They keep flying up against the house and the window, and fluttering there as if they would come in, or alight on the wood pile or the pump. They would commonly be mistaken for sparrows, but show more white when they fly, beside the yellow on the rump and sides of breast, seen near to, and two white bars on the wings; chubby birds.

P. M. Up Assabet. Cool and windy. Those who have put it off thus long make haste now to collect what apples were left out, and dig their potatoes before the ground shall freeze hard. Now again as in the spring we begin to

look for sheltered and sunny places where we may sit. I cannot go by a large dead swamp white-oak log this cool evening, but with no little exertion get it aboard, and some blackened swamp white-oak stumps whose earthy parts are all gone. As I am paddling home swiftly before the northwest wind, absorbed in my wooding, I see, this cool and grayish evening, that peculiar yellow light in the east, from the sun a little before setting. It has just come out beneath a great cold slate-colored cloud that occupies most of the western sky, as smaller ones the eastern, and now its rays, slanting over the hill in whose shadow I float, fall on the eastern trees and hills with a thin yellow light like a clear yellow wine; but somehow it reminds me that now the hearth-side is getting to be a more comfortable place than out-of-doors. Before I get home the sun has set, and a cold white light in the west succeeded.

Is not the poet bound to write his own biography? Is there any other work for him but a good journal? We do not wish to know how his imaginary hero, but how he the actual hero, lived from day to day.

That big swamp white-oak limb or tree which I found prostrate in the swamp was longer than my boat, and tipped it considerably. One whole side, the upper, was covered with green hypnum,

and the other was partly white with fungi. That green coat adhered when I split it. Immortal wood! that had begun to live again. Others burn unfortunate trees that lose their lives prematurely. These old stumps stand like anchorites or yogees, putting off their earthly garments, more and more sublimed from year to year, ready to be translated, and then they are ripe for my fire. I administer the last sacrament and purification. I find old pitch-pine sticks which have lain in the mud at the bottom of the river, nobody knows how long, and weigh them up, almost as heavy as lead, float them home, saw and split them. Their pitch, still fat and yellow, has saved them for me, and they burn like candles. I become a connoisseur in wood at last, take only the best.

Oct. 22, 1853. Yesterday toward night, gave Sophia and mother a sail as far as the Battle-ground. One-eyed John Goodwin, the fisherman, was loading into a handcart and conveying home the piles of driftwood which of late he had collected with his boat. It was a beautiful evening, and a clear amber sunset lit up all the eastern shores, and that man's employment, so simple and direct (though he is regarded by most as a vicious character), whose whole motive was so easy to fathom, thus to obtain his winter's wood, charmed me unspeakably. So much

do we love actions that are simple. They are all poetic. We, too, would fain be so employed, in a way so unlike the artificial and complicated pursuits of most men. Consider how the broker collects his winter's wood, what sport he makes of it, what is his boat and handcart. Postponing instant life, he makes haste to Boston in the cars, and there deals in stocks, not quite relishing his employment, and so earns the money with which he buys his fuel. When by chance I meet him about this indirect complicated business, I am not struck with the beauty of his employment. It does not harmonize with the amber sunset. How much more the former consults his genius, — some genius, at any rate. Now I should love to get my fuel so, have got some of it so. But, though I am glad to have it, I do not love to get it in any other way less simple and direct. If I buy one necessary of life, I cheat myself to some extent. I deprive myself of the pleasure, the inexpressible joy which is the unfailing reward of satisfying any want of my nature simply and truly. No trade is simple, but artificial and complex. It goes against the grain, it postpones life. If the first generation does not die of it, the third or fourth does. In face of all statistics, I will never believe that it is the descendants of tradesmen who keep the state alive, but of simple yeomen

or laborers. This indeed statistics say of the city reinforced by the country. This simplicity it is and the vigor it imparts, that enables the vagabond, though he does get drunk and is sent to the house of correction so often, to hold up his head among men. "If I go to Boston every day and sell tape from morning till night," says the merchant (which we will admit is not a beautiful action), "some time or other I shall be able to buy the best of fuel without stint." Yes, but not the pleasure of picking it up by the river-side, which, I may say, is of even more value than the warmth it yields. It is to give no account of my employment to say that I cut wood to keep me from freezing, or cultivate beans to keep me from starving. Oh, no, the greatest value of these labors is received before the wood is teamed home, or the beans are harvested. Goodwin stands on the solid earth. For such as he, no political economies, with their profit and loss, supply and demand, need ever be written, for they will need to use no policy. As for the complex ways of living, I love them not, however much I practice them. In as many places as possible, I will get my feet down to the earth. There is no secret in Goodwin's trade more than in the sun's. He is a most constant fisherman. He must well know the taste of pickerel by this time. When I can

remember to have seen him fishing almost daily for some time, if it rains, I am surprised on looking out to see him slowly wending his way to the river in his oilcloth coat, with his basket and pole. I saw him the other day fishing in the middle of the stream, the day after I had seen him fishing on the shore, while by a kind of magic I sailed by him. He said he was catching minnows for bait in the winter. When I was twenty rods off, he held up a pickerel that weighed two and a half pounds, which he had forgotten to show me before, and the next morning, as he afterwards told me, he caught one that weighed three pounds. If it is ever necessary to appoint a committee on fish ponds and pickerel, let him be one of them.

Oct. 22, 1857. P. M. To and round Flint's Pond. Crossing my old beanfield, I see the blue pond between the green pines in the field, and am reminded that we are almost reduced to the russet (*i. e.*, pale brown grass tinged with red blackberry vines) of such fields as this, the blue of water, the green of pines, and the dull reddish-brown of oak leaves. This sight of the blue water between the now perfectly green pines, seen over the light-brown pasture, is peculiarly Novemberish, though it may be like this in early spring.

Look from the high hill just before sundown,

over the pond. The mountains are a mere cold slate color. But what a perfect crescent of mountains we have in our northwest horizon. Do we ever give thanks for it? Even as pines and larches and hemlocks grow in communities in the wilderness, so it seems do mountains love society. Though there may be two or more ranges, one behind the other, and ten or twelve miles between them, yet, if the farthest are the highest, they are all seen as one group at this distance. I look up northwest to my mountains, as a farmer to his hill-lot or rocky pasture from his door. I drive no cattle to the Ipswich hills. I own no pasture for them there. My eyes it is alone that wander to those blue pastures which no drought affects. I am content to dwell here and see the sun go down behind my mountain fence.

Oct. 23, 1852. The milk weed (*Syriaca*) now rapidly discounting. The lanceolate pods having opened, the seeds spring out on the least jar, or when dried by the sun, and form a little fluctuating white silky mass or tuft, each held by a fine thread until a stronger puff of wind sets them free. It is pleasant to see the plant thus dispersing its seeds.

October has been the month of autumnal tints. The first of the month, the tints began to be more general, at which time the frosts began.

There were scattered bright tints long before, but not till then did the forest begin to be painted. By the end of the month, the leaves will either have fallen, or be seared and turned brown by the frosts, for the most part.

My friend is one who takes me for what I am. A stranger takes me for something else than what I am. We do not speak, we cannot communicate, till we find that we are recognized. The stranger supposes in our stead a third person whom we do not know, and we leave him to converse with that one. It is suicide for us to become abettors in misapprehending ourselves. Suspicion creates the stranger. I cannot abet any man in misapprehending myself.

What men call social virtues, good fellowship, is commonly but the virtue of pigs in a litter which lie close together to keep each other warm. It brings men together in crowds and mobs in bar-rooms and elsewhere, but it does not deserve the name of virtue.

Oct. 23, 1853. Many phenomena remind me that now is to some extent a second spring, not only the new springing and blossoming of flowers, but the peeping of the hylodes for some time, and the faint warbling of their spring notes, by many birds.

Oct. 23, 1855. Now is the time for chestnuts. A stone cast against the trees shakes them down

in showers upon one's head and shoulders. But I cannot excuse myself for using the stone. It is not innocent, it is not just so to maltreat the tree that feeds us. I am not disturbed by considering that if I thus shorten its life, I shall not enjoy its fruit so long, but am prompted to a more innocent course by motives purely of humanity. I sympathize with the tree, yet I heaved a big stone against the trunk, like a robber, not too good to commit murder. I trust I shall never do it again. These gifts should be accepted not merely with gentleness, but with a certain humble gratitude. It is not a time of distress when a little haste and violence even might be pardoned. It is worse than boorish, it is criminal, to inflict an unnecessary injury on the tree that feeds or shades us. If you would learn the secrets of nature, you must practice more humanity than others. The thought that I was robbing myself by injuring the tree did not occur to me, but I was affected as if I had cast a rock at a sentient being, with a duller sense than my own, it is true, but yet a distant relative. Behold a man cutting down a tree to come at the fruit! What is the moral of such an act? Ah, we begin, old men, in crime; would that we might grow innocent, at last, as the children of light.

Oct. 24, 1837. Every part of nature teaches that the passing away of one life is the making

room for another. The oak dies down to the ground, leaving within its rind a rich virgin mould which will impart a vigorous life to an infant forest. The pine leaves a sandy and sterile soil, the harder woods, a strong and fruitful mould. So this constant abrasion and decay of our lives makes the soil of our future growth. The wood we now mature, when it becomes mould, determines the character of our second growth. If I grow pines and birches, my mould will not sustain oak, but pines and birches, or, perchance, weeds and brambles.

Oct. 24, 1857. P. M. To Smith's chestnut grove. I get a couple of quarts of chestnuts. I find my account in this long-continued monotonous labor of picking chestnuts all the afternoon, brushing the leaves aside without looking up, absorbed in that, and forgetting better things awhile. My eye is educated to discover anything on the ground. It is probably wholesomer to look at the ground much, than at the heavens. This occupation affords a certain broad pause, and opportunity to start again afterwards, turn over a new leaf.

Oct. 24, 1858. A northeast storm, though not much rain falls to-day, but a fine driving mizzle. This, as usual, brings the geese, and at 2.30 P. M. I see two flocks go over, faintly honking. A great many must go over to-day,

and also alight in this neighborhood. This weather warns them of the approach of winter, and this wind speeds them on their way.

The brilliant autumnal colors are red and yellow, and the various tints and shades of these. Blue is reserved to be the color of the sky, but yellow and red are the colors of the earth-flower. Every fruit on ripening, and just before its fall, acquires a bright tint. So do the leaves ; so the sky before the end of the day, and the year near its setting. October is the red sunset sky, November the later twilight. Color stands for all ripeness and success. The noblest feature, the eye, is the fairest-colored, the jewel of the body.

Oct. 25, 1852. P. M. Down river to Ball's Hill in boat. Another perfect Indian-summer day. One of my oars makes a creaking sound like a block in a harbor, such a sound as would bring tears into an old sailor's eyes. It suggests to me adventure and seeking one's fortune. The water for some time has been clear of weeds mostly, and looks cool for fishes. We get into the lee of the hill near Abner Buttrick's (?) where is smooth water, and here it is very warm and sunny under the pitch pines. Some small husky white asters still survive. The autumnal tints grow gradually darker and duller, but not less rich to my eye. And now a hillside near the river exhibits the darkest crispy reds and

browns of every hue, all agreeably blended. At the foot, next the meadow, stands a front rank of smoke-like maples, bare of leaves, intermixed with yellow birches. Higher up are red oaks, of various shades of dull red, with yellowish, perhaps black oaks, intermixed, and walnuts now brown, and near the hill-top or rising above the rest, a still yellow oak, and here and there amid the rest or in the foreground on the meadow, dull, ashy, salmon-colored white oaks, large and small, all these contrasting with the clear, liquid, sempiternal green of pines. The sheen on the water blinds my eyes. Mint is still green and wonderfully recreating to smell. I had put such things behind me. It is hard to remember lilies now.

The constitution of the Indian mind appears to be the very opposite of the white man's. He is acquainted with a different side of nature. He measures his life by winters, not summers. His year is not measured by the sun, but consists of a certain number of moons, and his moons are measured not by days, but by nights. He has taken hold of the dark side of nature, the white man of the bright side.

Oct. 25, 1857. I am amused to see that Varro tells us the Latin *e* represents the vowel sound in the bleat of a sheep (Bee); if he had referred instead to some word pronounced by the

Romans, we should not be the wiser, but we do not doubt that sheep bleat to-day as they did then.

Oct. 25, 1860. The thistles which I now see have their heads recurved, which at least saves their down somewhat from moisture. When I pull out the down, the seed is, for the most part, left in the receptacle (?) in regular order there, like the pricks in a thimble; a slightly convex surface, the seeds set like cartridges in a circular cartridge box, in hollow cylinders, which look like circles crowded into more or less of a diamond, pentagonal, or hexagonal form. The perfectly dry and bristly involucre which hedges them round, so repulsive externally, is very neat and attractive within, as smooth and tender toward its charge as it is rough and prickly externally toward the foes that might do it injury. It is a hedge of imbricated, thin, and narrow leaflets, of a light brown color, beautifully glossy like silk, a most fit receptacle for the delicate, downy parachutes of the seed. The little seeds are kept dry under this unsuspected silky or satiny ceiling, whose old, weather-worn, and rough outside alone we see, like a mossy roof. I know of no object more unsightly to a careless glance than an empty thistle-head, yet if you examine it closely, it may remind you of the silk-lined

cradle in which a prince was rocked. That which seemed a mere brown and worn-out relic of the summer, sinking into the earth by the roadside, turns out to be a precious casket.

Oct. 26, 1851. I awoke this morning to infinite regret. In my dream I had been riding, but the horses bit each other, and occasioned endless trouble and anxiety, and it was my employment to hold their heads apart. Next I sailed over the sea in a small vessel such as the Northmen used, as it were, to the Bay of Fundy, and thence overland I sailed still, over the shallows about the sources of rivers toward the deeper channel of a stream which emptied into the gulf beyond. Again I was in my own small pleasure boat, learning to sail on the sea, and I raised my sail before my anchor, which I dragged far into the sea. I saw the buttons which had come off the coats of drowned men, and suddenly I saw my dog, when I knew not that I had one, standing in the sea up to his chin to warm his legs, which had been wet, and which the cool wind had numbed. Then I was walking in a meadow where the dry season permitted me to walk further than usual. Then I met Mr. Alcott and we fell to quoting and referring to grand and pleasing couplets and single lines which we had read in time past, and I quoted one which in my waking hours I have no know.

ledge of, but in my dream it was familiar enough. I only know that those I quoted expressed regret, and were like the following, though they were not these, viz.: —

> "The short parenthesis of life was sweet,"
> "The remembrance of youth is a sigh," etc.

Then again the instant I awoke, methought I was a musical instrument from which I heard a strain die out, — a bugle, a clarionet, or a flute. My body was the organ and channel of melody, as a flute is of the music that is breathed through it. My flesh sounded and vibrated still to the strain, and my nerves were the chords of the lyre. I awoke, therefore, to an infinite regret, to find myself not the thoroughfare of glorious and world-stirring inspirations, but a scuttle full of dirt, such a thoroughfare only as the street and the kennel, where perchance the wind may sometimes draw forth a strain of music from a straw.

I can partly account for this. Last evening I was reading Laing's account of the Northmen, and though I did not write in my journal, I remember feeling a fertile regret, and deriving even an inexpressible satisfaction as it were from my ability to feel regret, which made that evening richer than those which had preceded it. I heard the last strain or flourish, as I woke, played on my body as the instrument. Such I

knew I had been and might be again, and my regret arose from the consciousness how little like a musical instrument my body was now.

Oct. 26, 1852. Walden and Cliffs. P. M. It is cool to-day and windier. The water is rippled considerably. As I stand in the boat, the farther off the water, the bluer it is. Looking straight down, it is a dark green. Hence apparently the celestial blueness of those distant river reaches, when the water is agitated so that the surfaces of the waves reflect the sky at the right angle. It is a darker blue than that of the sky itself. When I look down on the pond from the peak, it is far less blue.

The blue-stemmed and white golden-rod apparently survive till winter, push up and blossom anew.

At this season we seek warm, sunny lees and hillsides, as that under the pitch pines by Walden shore, where we cuddle and warm ourselves in the sun, as by a fire, where we may get some of its reflected as well as direct heat.

Coming by Haden's I see that, the sun setting, its rays, which yet find some vapor to lodge on in the clear cold air, impart a purple tinge to the mountains in the northwest. I think it is only in cold weather that I see this.

Oct. 26, 1853. I well remember the time this year when I first heard the dreaming of the

toads. I was laying out house lots on Little River in Haverhill. We had had some raw, cold, and wet weather, but this day was remarkably warm and pleasant, and I had thrown off my overcoat. I was going home to dinner past a shallow pool, green with springing grass, when it occurred to me that I heard the dreaming of the toad. It rung through and filled all the air, though I had not heard it once, before. I turned my companion's attention to it, but he did not appear to perceive it as a new sound in the air. Loud and prevailing as it is, most men do not notice it at all. It is to them perchance a sort of simmering or seething of all nature. It affects their thoughts, though they are not conscious of hearing it. How watchful we must be to keep the crystal well that we are made, clear. Often we are so jarred by chagrins in dealing with the world that we cannot reflect.

Everything beautiful impresses us as sufficient to itself. Many men who have had much intercourse with the world, and not borne the trial well, affect me as all resistance, all burr and rind, without any gentle man or tender and innocent core left.

It is surprising how any reminiscence of a different season of the year affects us. When I meet with any such in my journal, it affects me as poetry, and I appreciate that other season

and that particular phenomenon more than at the time. The world so seen is all one spring, and full of beauty. You only need to make a faithful record of an average summer day's experience and summer mood, and read it in the winter, and it will carry you back to more than that summer day alone could show. Only the rarest flower, the purest melody of the season, thus comes down to us.

When, after feeling dissatisfied with my life, I aspire to something better, am more scrupulous, more reserved and continent, as if expecting somewhat, suddenly I find myself full of life as a nut of meat, — am overflowing with a quiet, genial mirthfulness. I think to myself, I must attend to my diet. I must get up earlier and take a morning walk. I must have done with business, and devote myself to my muse. So I dam up my stream, and my waters gather to a head. I am freighted with thought.

Oct. 26, 1855. P. M. To Conantum. I examine some frost weed. It is still quite alive, indeed just out of bloom, the leaves now a purplish brown, and its bark at the ground is quite tight and entire. Pulling it up, I find bright pink shoots to have put forth, half an inch long, and starting even at the surface of the sod. Is not this, as well as its second blossoming, somewhat peculiar to this plant? and may it not be

that when at last the cold is severe, the sap is frozen and bursts the bark, and the breath of the dying plant is frozen about it? I see a red squirrel dash out from the wall, snatch an apple from amid many on the ground, and, running swiftly up the tree with it, proceed to eat it, sitting on a smooth dead limb with its back to the wind, and its tail curled close over its back. It allows me to approach within eight feet. It holds the apple between its two fore paws, and scoops out the pulp mainly with its lower incisors, making a saucer-like cavity, high and thin at the edge, where it bites off the skin and lets it drop. It keeps its jaws moving very briskly, from time to time turning the apple round and round with its paws, as it eats, like a wheel in a plane at right angles with its body. It holds it up and twirls it with ease. Suddenly it pauses, having taken alarm at something, then drops the remainder of the apple in the hollow of the bough, and glides off in short snatches, uttering a faint, sharp, bird-like note.

I sometimes think I must go off to some wilderness, where I can have a better opportunity to play life, can find more suitable materials to build my house with, and enjoy the pleasure of collecting my fuel in the forest.

I have more taste for the wild sports of hunting, fishing, wigwam building, and collecting

wood wherever you find it, than for butchering, farming, carpentry, working in a factory or going to a wood market.

Oct. 26, 1857. P. M. Round by Puffer's via Clamshell. A driving east or northeast storm. I can see through the stormy mist only a mile. The river is getting partly over the meadows at last, and my spirits rise with it. Methinks this rise of the waters must affect every thought and deed in the town. It qualifies my sentence and life. I trust there will appear in this journal some flow, some gradual filling of the springs and raising of the streams, that the accumulating grists may be ground. A storm is a new and in some respects more active life in nature. Larger migrating birds make their appearance. They at least sympathize with the movements of the watery element and the winds. I see two great fishhawks (*possibly* blue herons) slowly beating northeast against the storm, — by what a curious tie circling ever near each other and in the same direction, as if you might expect the very motes in the air to be paired, two long undulating wings conveying a feathered body through the misty atmosphere and this inseparably associated with another planet of the same species. I can just glimpse their undulating lives. Damon and Pythias they must be. The waves beneath, which are of kindred form, are

still more social, multitudinous, ἀνήριθμον. Where is my mate, beating against the storm with me? They fly according to the valley of the river, northeast or southwest. I start up snipes also at Clamshell meadow. This weather sets the migratory birds in motion, and also makes them bolder. These regular phenomena of the seasons get at last to be (they were, at first, of course) simply and plainly phenomena or phases of my life. The seasons and all their changes are in me. I see not a dead eel or floating snake, or a gull, but it sounds my life, and is like a line or accent in its poem. Almost I believe the Concord would not rise and overflow its banks again, were I not here. After a while I learn what my moods and seasons are. I would have nothing subtracted, I can imagine nothing added. My moods are thus periodical, not two days in the year alike: the perfect correspondence of nature with man, so that he is at home in her!

Many sparrows are flitting past amid the birches and sallows. They are chiefly *Fringilla hiemalis*. How often they may be seen thus flitting along in a straggling manner from bush to bush, so that the hedgerow will be all alive with them, each uttering a faint chip from time to time, bewildering you so that you know not if the greater part are gone by, or still to come.

One rests but a moment in the tree before you and is gone again. You wonder if they know whither they are bound, and how their leader is appointed. Those sparrows, too, are thoughts I have; they come and go, they flit by quickly on their migrations, uttering only a faint chip, I know not whither or why, exactly. One will not rest on its twig for me to scrutinize it. The whole copse will be alive with my rambling thoughts, bewildering me by their very multitude, but they will be all gone directly without leaving me a feather.

My loftiest thought is somewhat like an eagle that suddenly comes into the field of view, suggesting great things and thrilling the beholder, as if it were bound hitherward with a message for me. But it comes no nearer, circles and soars away, disappointing me, till it is lost behind a cliff or a cloud.

Spring is brown; summer, green; autumn, yellow; winter, white; November, gray.

Oct. 27, 1851. This morning I awoke and found it snowing and the ground covered with snow, quite unexpectedly, for last night it was rainy and not cold. The strong northwest wind blows the damp snow along almost horizontally. The birds fly about as if seeking shelter. The cold numbs my fingers this morning. Winter, with its inwardness, is upon us. A man is constrained to sit down and to think.

The obstacles which the heart meets with are like granite blocks, which one alone cannot move. She who was as the morning light to me, is now neither the morning star nor the evening star. We meet but to find each other further asunder, and the oftener we meet, the more rapid the divergence. So a star of the first magnitude pales in the heavens, not from any fault in the observer's eye, nor from any fault in itself, perchance, but because its progress in its own system has put a greater distance between.

The night is oracular. What have been the intimations of the night? I ask. How have you passed the night? Good night!

My friend will be bold to conjecture. He will guess bravely at the significance of my words.

The *Ardea minor* still with us. Saw a woodcock or snipe (?) feeding, probing the mud with its long bill, under the railroad bridge, within two feet of me. For a long time I could not scare it far away. What a disproportionate length of bill!

Oct. 27, 1853. I love to be reminded of that universal and eternal spring when the minute, crimson-starred female flowers of the hazel are peeping forth on the hillsides, when nature revives in all her pores.

Some less obvious and commonly unobserved signs of the progress of the seasons interest me

most, like the loose dangling catkins of the hop-hornbeam, or of the black or yellow birch. I can recall distinctly to my mind the image of these things, and that time in which they flourished is glorious, as if it were before the fall of man. I see all nature for the time under this aspect. These features are particularly prominent; as if the first object I saw on approaching this planet in the spring was the catkins of the hop hornbeam on the hillsides. As I sailed by, I saw the yellowish waving sprays.

Oct. 27, 1857. P. M. Up river. The third day of steady rain. Wind northeast. I go up the river as far as Hubbard's second grove in order to share the general commotion and excitement of the elements, wind and waves and rain. A half dozen boats at the landing were full, and the waves beating over them. It was hard getting at and hauling up and emptying mine. It was a rod and a half from the water's edge. Now look out for your rails and other fencing stuff and loose lumber, lest it be floated off. I sailed swiftly, standing up, and tipping my boat to make it keel on its side, though at first it was hard to keep off a lee shore. It was exciting to feel myself tossed by the dark waves, and hear them surge about me. The reign of water now begins, and how it gambols and revels; waves are its leaves, foam its blossoms. How they run

and leap in great droves, deriving new excitement from each other; schools of porpoises and blackfish are only more animated waves, and have acquired the gait and gambols of the sea itself.

I hear that Sammy Hoar saw geese go over to-day. The fall, strictly speaking, is approaching an end in this probably annual northeast storm. Thus the summer winds up its accounts. The Indians, it is said, did not look for winter till the springs were full. The ducks and other fowl, reminded of the lateness, go by. The few remaining leaves come fluttering down. The snow-fleas, as to-day, are washed out of the bark of meadow trees, and cover the surface of the flood. The winter's wood is bargained for and being hauled. There is not much more for the farmer to do in the fields. This storm reminds men to put things on a winter footing.

The real facts of a poet's life would be of more value to us than any work of his art. I mean that the very scheme and form of his poetry, so called, is adopted at a sacrifice of vital truth and poetry. Shakespeare has left us his fancies and imaginings, but the truth of his life, with its becoming circumstances, we know nothing about. The writer is reported, the liver not at all. Shakespeare's house! how hollow it is! No man can conceive of Shakespeare in that house. We want the basis of fact, of

an actual life, to complete our Shakespeare as much as a statue wants its pedestal. A poet's life, with this broad actual basis, would be as superior to Shakespeare's, as a lichen, with its base or thallus, is superior, in the order of being, to a fungus.

The Littleton giant brought us a load of coal within the week. He appears deformed and weakly, though actually well-formed. He does not nearly stand up straight. His knees knock together. They touch when he is standing most upright, and so reduce his height at least three inches. He is also very round-shouldered and stooping, probably from the habit of crouching to conceal his height. He wears a low hat for the same purpose. The tallest man looks like a boy beside him. He has a seat to his wagon made on purpose for him. He habitually stops before all doors. You wonder what his horses think of him, that a strange horse is not afraid of him. His voice is deep and full, but mild, for he is quite modest and retiring, really a worthy man, 't is said. Pity he could not have been undertaken by a committee in season, and put through like the boy Safford, been well developed bodily and mentally, taught to hold up his head, and not mind people's eyes or remarks. It is remarkable that the giants have never correspondingly great hearts.

Oct. 27, 1858. Who will undertake to describe in words the difference in tint between two neighboring leaves on the same tree [in autumn] or of two thousand? for by so many the eye is addressed in a glance. In describing the richly spotted leaves, for instance, how often we find ourselves using ineffectually words which indicate faintly our good intentions, giving them in our despair a terminal twist toward our mark, such as reddish, yellowish, purplish, etc. We cannot make a hue of words, for they are not to be compounded like colors, and hence we are obliged to use such ineffectual expressions as reddish-brown, etc. They need to be ground together.

Oct. 28, 1853. For a year or two past, my publisher, falsely so called, has been writing from time to time, to ask what disposition should be made of the copies of "A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers" still on hand, and at last suggesting that he had use for the room they occupied in his cellar. So I had them all sent to me here, and they have arrived to-day by express, filling the man's wagon, 706 copies out of an edition of 1000, which I bought of Munroe four years ago, and have been ever since paying for and have not quite paid for yet. The wares are sent to me at last, and I have an opportunity to examine my purchase. They are something more substantial than fame, as

my back knows, which has borne them up two flights of stairs to a place similar to that to which they trace their origin. Of the remaining 290 and odd, 75 were given away, the rest sold. I have now a library of nearly 900 volumes, over 700 of which I wrote myself. Is it not well that the author should behold the fruits of his labor? My works are piled up on one side of my chamber half as high as my head, my opera omnia. This is authorship, these are the work of my brain. There was just one piece of good luck in the venture. The unbound were tied up by the printer four years ago in stout paper wrappers, and inscribed: —

H. D. Thoreau's
Concord River
50 cops.

so Munroe had only to cross out "River" and write "Mass.," and deliver them to the expressman at once. I can see now what I write for, the result of my labors. Nevertheless in spite of this result, sitting beside the inert mass of my works, I take up my pen to-night to record what thought or experience I may have had, with as much satisfaction as ever. Indeed I believe that this result is more inspiring and better for me than if a thousand had bought my wares. It affects my privacy less and leaves me freer.

Oct. 28, 1855. By boat to Leaning Hem-

locks. As I paddle under the hemlock bank this shady afternoon, about three o'clock, I see a screech-owl sitting on the edge of a hollow hemlock stump about three feet high, at the base of a large hemlock. It sits with its head down, eying me with its eyes partly open, about twenty feet off. When it hears me move, it turns its head toward me, perhaps one eye partly open, with its great, gleaming, golden iris. You see two whitish triangular lines above the eye, meeting at the bill, with a sharp reddish-brown triangle between, and a narrow curved line of black under each eye. At this distance and in this light, you see only a black spot where the eye is, and the question is whether the eyes are open or not. It sits on the lee side of the tree this raw and windy day. You would say this was a bird without a neck. Its short bill, which rests upon its breast, scarcely projects at all, but in a state of rest the whole upper part of the bird from the wings is rounded off smoothly, except the horns, which stand up conspicuously or are slanted back. After watching it ten minutes from the boat, I landed two rods above, and, stealing up quietly behind the hemlock, though from the windward, I looked carefully round it, and to my surprise, saw the owl still sitting there; so I sprang round quickly with my arm outstretched, and caught it in my hand. It was

so surprised that it offered no resistance at first, only glared at me in mute astonishment with eyes as big as saucers. But erelong it began to snap its bill, making quite a noise, and as I rolled it up in my handkerchief and put it in my pocket, it bit my finger slightly. I soon took it out of my pocket, and tying the handkerchief, left it on the bottom of the boat. So I carried it home, and made a small cage in which to keep it for a night. When I took it up, it clung so tightly to my hand as to sink its claws into my fingers and bring blood. When alarmed or provoked most, it snaps its bill and hisses. It puffs up its feathers to nearly twice its usual size, stretches out its neck, and with wide-open eyes stares this way and that, moving its head slowly and undulatingly from side to side with a curious motion. While I write this evening, I see there is ground for much superstition in it. It looks out on me from a dusky corner of its box with its great solemn eyes, perfectly still. I was surprised to find that I could imitate its note, as I remember it, by a guttural whimpering. A remarkably squat figure, being very broad in proportion to its length, with a short tail, and very cat-like in the face with its horns and great eyes. Remarkably large feet and talons, legs thickly clothed to the talons with whitish down. It

would lower its head, stretch out its neck, and, bending it from side to side, peer at you with laughable circumspection; from side to side, as if to catch or absorb into its eyes every ray of light, strain at you with complacent yet earnest scrutiny, raising and lowering its head, and moving it from side to side in a slow and regular manner, at the same time snapping its bill smartly perhaps and faintly hissing and puffing itself up more and more, cat-like, turtle-like, both in hissing and swelling. The slowness and gravity, not to say solemnity of this motion are striking. There is plainly no jesting in this case. General color of the owl a rather pale and perhaps slightly reddish brown, the feathers centred with black. Perches with two claws above, and two below the perch. He has a slight body covered with a mass of soft and light-lying feathers, his head muffled in a great hood. He must be quite comfortable in winter. Dropped a pellet of fur and bones (?) in his cage. He sat not really moping, but trying to sleep in a corner of his box all day, yet with one or both eyes slightly open all the while. I never once caught him with his eyes shut. Ordinarily he stood rather than sat on his perch.

Oct. 29. Up Assabet. Carried my owl to the hill again; had to shake him out of the box, for he did not go of his own accord. (He had

learned to alight on his perch, and it was surprising how lightly and noiselessly he would hop upon it.) There he stood on the grass, at first bewildered, with his horns pricked up and looking toward me. In this strong light, the pupils of his eyes suddenly contracted and the iris expanded, till they were two great brazen orbs with a central spot merely. His attitude expressed astonishment more than anything else. I was obliged to toss him up a little that he might feel his wings, and then he flapped away low and heavily to a hickory on a hillside twenty rods off. I had let him out on the plain just east of the hill. Thither I followed and tried to start him again. He was now on the qui vive, yet would not start. He erected his head, showing some neck narrower than the round head above. His eyes were broad brazen rings around bullets of black. His horns stood quite an inch high, as not before. As I moved around him, he turned his head always toward me till he looked *directly* behind himself, as he sat crosswise on a bough. He behaved as if bewildered and dazzled, gathering all the light he could, and even straining his great eyes to make me out, but not inclining to fly. I had to lift him again with a stick to make him fly, and then he only rose to a higher perch, where at last he seemed to seek the shelter of a thicker

cluster of sere leaves, partly crouching there. He never appeared so much alarmed as surprised and astonished. At the bottom of the hollow [stump?] on the edge of which he sat when I first saw him yesterday, eighteen inches beneath him, was a very soft bed of the fine green moss, hypnum, which grows on the bank close by, probably his own bed. It had been recently put there.

I have got a load of great hard-wood stumps.

For sympathy with my neighbors, I might about as well live in China. They are to me barbarians, with their committee-works and gregariousness.

Oct. 28, 1857. As I sat at the wall corner, high on Conantum, the sky generally covered with continuous, cheerless-looking slate-colored clouds, except in the west, I saw through the hollows of the clouds here and there the blue appearing, and all at once a low-slanted glade of sunlight from one of heaven's west windows behind me fell on the bare gray maples, lighting them up with an incredibly intense and pure white light; then, going out there, it lit up some white birch stems south of the pond, then the gray rocks and the pale reddish young oaks of the lower cliffs, then the very pale brown meadow grass, and at last the brilliant white breasts of two ducks tossing on the agitated

surface far off on the pond, which I had not detected before. It was but a transient ray, and there was no sunshine afterward, but the intensity of the light was surprising and impressive, a halo, a glory in which only the just deserved to live. It was as if the air, purified by the long storm, reflected these few rays from side to side with a complete illumination, like a perfectly polished mirror, while the effect was greatly enhanced by the contrast with the dull, dark clouds and the sombre earth. As if nature did not dare at once to let in the full blaze of the sun to this combustible atmosphere. It was a serene Elysian light, in which the deeds I have dreamed of, but not realized, might have been performed. No perfectly fair weather ever offered such an arena for noble deeds. It was such a light as we behold but dwell not in. Late in the year, at the eleventh hour, we have visions of the life we might have lived. In each case, every recess was filled and lit up by the pure white light. The maples were Potter's, far down stream, but I dreamed I walked like a liberated spirit in the maze; the withered meadow grass was as soft and glorious as paradise. And then it was remarkable that the light-giver should have revealed to me for all life the heaving white breasts of those two ducks within this glade of light. It was extin-

guished and relit as it traveled. Tell me precisely the value and significance of these transient gleams which come sometimes at the end of the day before the final dispersion of the clouds at the close of a storm; too late to be of any service to the works of man for the day, and though the whole night after may be overcast. Is not this a language to be heard and understood? There is in the brown and gray earth and rocks, and the withered leaves and bare twigs at this season a purity more correspondent to the light itself than summer offers.

I look up and see a male marsh-hawk, with his clean-cut wings, that has just skimmed past over my head, not at all disturbed, only tilting his body a little, now twenty rods off, with a demi-semi-quaver of his wings. He is a very neat flyer. I do not often see the marsh-hawk thus. What a regular figure this fellow makes with his broad tail and broad wings! Does he perceive me, that he rises higher and circles to one side? He goes round now one full circle without a flap, tilting his wing a little. Then flaps three or four times, and rises higher. Now he comes on like a billow, screaming, steady as a planet in its orbit, with his head bent down, but on second thought that small sprout land seems worthy of a longer scrutiny, and he gives one circle backward over it. His

scream is something like the whinnying of a horse, if it is not rather a *split squeal*. It is a hoarse, tremulous breathing forth of his winged energy. But why is it so regularly repeated at that height? Is it not to scare his prey, that he may see by its motion where it is, or to inform its mate or companion of its whereabouts? Now he crosses the at present broad river steadily, deserving to have one or two rabbits at least to swing about him. What majesty there is in this small bird's flight!

Oct. 28, 1858. How handsome the great red-oak acorns now. I stand under the tree on Emerson's lot. They are still falling. I heard one fall into the water as I approached, and thought a muskrat had plunged. They strew the ground and the bottom of the river thickly, and while I stand here, I hear one strike the boughs with force, as it comes down and drops into the water. The part that was covered by the cup is whitish woolly. How munificent is nature to create this profusion of wild fruit, as it were merely to gratify our eyes. Though inedible, they stand by me longer than the fruits which I eat. If they had been plums or chestnuts I should have eaten them on the spot, and probably forgotten them. They would have afforded me only a momentary gratification, but, being acorns, I remember and, as it were, feed

on them still. They are untasted fruits, forever in store for me. I know not of their flavor as yet. That is postponed to some unimagined winter evening. These which we admire, but do not eat, are nuts of the gods. When time is no more we shall crack them. I cannot help liking them better than horse chestnuts, not only because they are of a much handsomer form but because they are indigenous. What hale, plump fellows they are! They can afford not to be useful to me, not to know me or be known by me. They go their way, I go mine, and it turns out that sometimes I go after them.

Oct. 28, 1859. Walnuts commonly fall, and the black walnuts at Smith's are at least one half fallen. They are of the form and size of a small lemon, and, what is singular, have a rich nutmeg fragrance. They are turning dark brown. Gray says it is rare in the eastern, but very common in the western states. Is it indigenous in Massachusetts? Emerson says it is, but rare. If so, it is much the most remarkable nut we have.

Oct. 29, 1837. A curious incident happened a few weeks ago which I think it worth while to record. John and I had been searching for Indian relics, and been successful enough to find two arrow-heads and a pestle, when, of a Sunday evening, with our heads full of the past

and its remains, we strolled to the mouth of Swamp Bridge Brook. As we neared the brow of the hill forming the bank of the river, inspired by my theme, I broke forth into an extravagant eulogy of the savage times, using most violent gesticulations by way of illustration. "There on Nawshawtuck," said I, "was their lodge, the rendezvous of the tribe, and yonder on Clamshell Hill, their feasting ground. This was no doubt a favorite haunt; here on this brow was an eligible lookout-post. How often have they stood on this very spot, at this very hour, when the sun was sinking behind yonder woods, and gilding with his last rays the waters of the Musketaquid, and pondered the day's success and the morrow's prospects, or communed with the spirits of their fathers gone before them to the land of the shades! Here," I exclaimed, "stood Tahatowan, and there," to complete the period, "is Tahatowan's arrow-head." We instantly proceeded to sit down on the spot I had pointed to, and I, to carry out the joke, to lay bare an ordinary stone which my whim had selected, when lo! the first I laid hands on, the grubbing stone that was to be, proved a most perfect arrow-head, as sharp as if just from the hands of the Indian fabricator.

Oct. 29, 1857. There are some things of

which I cannot at once tell, whether I have dreamed them or they are real, as if they were just perchance establishing or else losing a real basis in my world. This is especially the case in the early morning hours, when there is a gradual transition from dreams to waking thoughts, from illusions to actualities. Such early morning thoughts as I speak of occupy a debatable ground between dreams and waking thoughts; they are a sort of permanent dream in my mind. At least, until we have for some time changed our position from prostrate to erect, and faced or commenced some of the duties of the day, we cannot tell what we have dreamed from what we have actually experienced. This morning, for instance, for the twentieth time, at least, I thought of that mountain in the easterly part of the town, where no high hill actually is, which once or twice I had ascended, and often allowed my thoughts alone to climb. I now contemplate it as a familiar thought which I have surely had for many years from time to time, but whether anything could have reminded me of it in the middle of yesterday, whether I ever remembered it before in broad daylight, I doubt. I can now eke out the vision I had of it this morning with my old and yesterday-forgotten dreams. My way up used to be through a dark and unfrequented wood at

its base. (I cannot now tell exactly, it was so long ago, under what circumstances I first ascended, only that I shuddered, as I went along, and have an indistinct remembrance of having been out over night alone.) Then I steadily ascended along a rock ridge, half clad with stinted trees, where wild beasts haunted, till I lost myself quite in the upper air and clouds, seeming to pass an imaginary line which separates a hill, mere earth heaped up, from a mountain, into a superterranean grandeur and sublimity. What distinguishes that summit above the earthy line, is that it is unhandseled, awful, grand. It can never become familiar. You are lost the moment you set foot there. You know no path, but wander, thrilled, over the bare and pathless rock, as if it were solidified air and cloud. That rocky, misty summit, secreted in the cloud, was far more thrillingly awful and sublime than the crater of a volcano spouting fire.

This is a matter we can partly understand. The perfect mountain height is already thoroughly purified. It is as if you trod with awe the face of a god turned up, unwillingly, but helplessly, yielding to the law of gravity. In dreams I am shown this height from time to time, and I seem to have asked my fellow once to climb there with me, and yet I am constrained to believe that I never actually ascended it

Now first I recall that it rises in my mind where lies the burying hill. You might go through that gate to enter the dark wood. Perchance that was the grave, but that hill and its graves are so concealed and obliterated by the awful mountain that I never thought of them as underlying it. My old way down was different, and indeed this was another way up, though I never so ascended. I came out, as I descended, from the belt of wood, breathing the thicker air, into a familiar pasture, and along down by a wall. Often as I go along the low side of this pasture, I let my thoughts ascend toward the mount, gradually entering the stinted wood (nature subdued) and the thinner air. Ever there are two ways up, one through the dark wood, the other through the sunny pasture. That is, I reach and discover the mountain only through the dark wood, but I see to my surprise, when I look off between the mists from its summit, how it is ever adjacent to my native fields, nay, imminent over them, and accessible through a sunny pasture. Why is it that in the lives of men we hear more of the dark wood than of the sunny pasture? Though the pleasure of ascending the mountain is largely mixed with awe, my thoughts are purified and sublimed by it, as if I had been translated.

We see mankind generally, who toil to ac-

quire wealth, or perhaps inherit it, or acquire it by other accident, having recourse for relaxation after excessive toil, or as a mere relief from idle ennui, to artificial amusements, rarely elevating, often debasing. I think men are commonly mistaken with regard to amusements. Every one who deserves to be regarded as higher than the brute may be supposed to have an earnest purpose, to accomplish which is the object of his existence, and this is at once his work and his supreme pleasure, and for diversion and relaxation, for suggestion and education and strength, there is offered the never-failing amusement of getting a living, — never-failing, I mean, when temperately indulged in. I know of no such amusement, so wholesome, and in every sense profitable, for instance, as to spend an hour or two in a day, picking berries or other fruits which will be food for the winter, or collecting driftwood from the river for fuel, or cultivating the few beans or potatoes which I want. Theatres and operas, which intoxicate for a season, are as nothing compared with these pursuits. And so it is with all the true arts of life. Farming and building and manufacturing and sailing are the greatest and wholesomest amusements that were ever invented, for God invented them, and I suppose that the farmers and mechanics know it, only I think they indulge to excess

generally, and so what was meant for a joy becomes the sweat of the brow. Gambling, horse-racing, loafing, and rowdyism generally after all tempt but few. The mass are tempted by those other amusements, of farming, etc. By these various pursuits your experience becomes singularly complete and rounded. Their novelty and significance are remarkable. Such is the path by which we climb to the height of our being. Compare the poetry which such simple pursuits have inspired with the unreadable volumes which have been written about art. I find when I have been building a fence or surveying a farm, or even collecting simples, that these were the true path to perception and enjoyment. My being seems to have put forth new roots, and to be more strongly planted. This is the true way to crack the nut of happiness. If as a poet or naturalist you wish to explore a given neighborhood, go and live in it, that is, get your living in it. Fish in its streams, hunt in its forests, gather fuel from its water, its woods, cultivate the ground, and pluck the wild fruits, etc., etc. This will be the surest and speediest way to those perceptions you covet. No amusement has worn better than farming. It tempts men just as strongly to-day as in the day of Cincinnatus. Healthily and properly pursued, it is not a whit more grave than huckleberrying,

and if it takes airs on itself as superior, there is something wrong about it. I have aspired to practice in succession all the honest arts of life that I may gather all the fruits. But if you are intemperate, if you toil to raise an unnecessary amount, even the large crop of wheat becomes as a small crop of chaff. If our living were once honestly got, then it would be time to invent other amusements.

After reading Ruskin on the love of nature, I think, "Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring!" He there, to my surprise, expresses the common infidelity of his age and race. He has not implicitly surrendered himself to nature. And what does he substitute for her? I do not know, unless it be the Church of England, questioning whether that relation to nature was of so much value after all. It is sour grapes! He does not speak to the condition of foxes that have more spring in the legs. The love of nature and fullest perception of the revelation which she is to man, is not compatible with belief in the peculiar revelation of the Bible which Ruskin entertains.

Oct. 29, 1858. The cat comes stealthily creeping towards some prey amid the withered flowers in the garden, which being disturbed by my approach, she runs low toward it, with an unusual glare or superficial light in her eye,

ignoring her oldest acquaintance, as wild as her remotest ancestor, and presently I see the first tree sparrow hopping there. I hear them also amid the alders by the river singing sweetly, but a few notes.

English plants have English habits here. They are not yet acclimated. They are early or late, as if ours were an English spring or autumn, and no doubt in course of time a change will be produced in their constitutions similar to that which is observed in the English man here.

Oct. 30, 1858. I see that Prichard's mountain ash (European) has lately put forth new leaves when all the old have fallen. They are four or five inches long. But the American has not started. It knows better.

Oct. 21, 1850. This has been the most perfect afternoon of the year. The air quite warm enough, perfectly still and dry and clear, and not a cloud in the sky. Scarcely the song of a cricket is heard to disturb the stillness.

Our Indian summer, I am tempted to say, is the finest season of the year. Here has been such a day as I think Italy never sees.

A fair afternoon, a celestial afternoon, cannot occur but we mar our pleasure by reproaching ourselves that we do not make all our days beautiful. The thought of what I am, of my pitiful conduct, deters me from receiving what

joy I might from the glorious days that visit me. After the era of youth is passed, the knowledge of ourselves is an alloy that spoils our satisfactions. I am wont to think that I could spend my days contentedly in any retired country house that I see, for I see it to advantage now and without incumbrance. I have not yet imported my humdrum thoughts, my prosaic habits, into it to mar the landscape. What is this beauty in the landscape but a certain fertility in me? I look in vain to see it realized but in my own life. If I could wholly cease to be ashamed of myself, I think all my days would be fair.

Oct. 31, 1853. P. M. By boat with Sophia to my grapes laid down in front of Fair Haven. It is a beautiful, warm, and calm Indian-summer afternoon, and the river is so high over the meadows, the pads and other low weeds so deeply buried, and the water so smooth and glassy withal that I am reminded of a calm April day during the freshets. The coarse withered grass, and the willows and button-bushes with their myriad balls, and whatever else stands on the brink, is reflected with wonderful distinctness. This shore thus seen from the boat is like the ornamented frame of a mirror. The button-balls, etc., are more distinct in the reflection, if I remember, because they have there for back-

ground the reflected sky, but the actual ones are seen against the russet meadow. I even see houses a mile off reflected in the meadow flood. The cocks crow in barnyards, as if with new lustiness. They seem to appreciate the day. The river is three feet and more above the summer level. I see many pickerel dart away as I push my boat over the meadows. They lie up there now. There are already myriads of snow-fleas on the water next the shore, and on the cranberries we pick in the wreck, as if they were peppered. When we ripple the surface, the undulating light is reflected from the waves upon the bank and bushes and withered grass. Is not this already November, when the yellow and scarlet tints are gone from the forest? It is very pleasant to float along over the smooth meadow, where every weed and each stem of coarse grass that rises above the surface has another answering to it, and even more distinct in the water beneath, making a rhyme to it, so that the most irregular form appears regular. A few scattered dry and clean very light straw-colored grasses are a cheap and simple beauty, thus reflected.

I slowly discover that this is a gossamer day. I first see the fine lines stretching from one weed, or grass-stem or rush, to another, sometimes seven or eight feet distant horizontally,

and only four or five inches above the water. When I look further, I find that they are everywhere and on everything, sometimes forming conspicuous fine white gossamer webs on the heads of grasses. They are so abundant that they seem to have been suddenly produced in the atmosphere by some chemistry, spun out of air, I know not for what purpose. I remember that in Kirby and Spence it is not allowed that the spider can walk on the water to carry his web across from rush to rush, but here I see myriads of spiders on the water making some kind of progress, and at least with a line attached to them. True, they do not appear to walk well, but they stand up high and dry on the tips of their toes, and are blown along quite fast. They are of various sizes and colors, though mostly a greenish brown or else black, some very small. These gossamer lines are not visible unless between you and the sun. We pass some black willows now, of course, quite leafless, and when they are between us and the sun, they are so completely covered with these fine cobwebs or lines, mainly parallel to one another, that they make one solid roof, a misty roof, against the sun. They are not drawn taut, but curved downward in the middle, like the rigging of a vessel, the ropes which stretch from mast to mast, as if the fleets of a thousand Lilliputian

nations were collected one behind another under bare poles; but when we have floated a few feet farther, and thrown the willow out of the sun's range, not a thread can be seen on it. I landed and walked up and down the causeway, and found it the same there, the gossamer reaching across the causeway, though not necessarily supported on the other side. They streamed southward with the slight zephyr, as if the year were weaving her shroud out of light. There were spiders on the rail [of the causeway] that produced them, similar to those on the water. The air appeared crowded with them. It was a wonder they did not get into the mouth and nostrils, or that we did not feel them on our faces, or continually going and coming among them did not whiten our clothes more. And yet one, with his back to the sun, walking the other way, would observe nothing of all this. Methinks it is only on these very finest days, late in the autumn, that the phenomenon is seen, as if that fine vapor of the morning were spun into these webs. According to Kirby and Spence, "In Germany these flights of gossamer appear so constantly in autumn that they are there metaphorically called 'Der Fliegende Sommer,' the flying or departing summer." What can possess these spiders, thus to run all at once to every the least elevation, and let off this wonderful stream? Harris

tells me he does not know what it means. Sophia thought that thus, at last, they emptied themselves and wound up, or, I suggested, unwound themselves, cast off their mortal coil. It looks like a mere frolic spending and wasting of themselves, of their vigor, now that there is no further use for it, their July, perchance, being killed or banished by the frost.

Oct. 31, 1857. In the Lee farm swamp, by the old Sam Barrett mill-site, I see two kinds of ferns still green and much in fruit, apparently the *Aspidium spinulosum* (?) and *cristatum* (?). They are also common in the swamps now. They are quite fresh in those cold and wet places, and almost flattened down now. The atmosphere of the house is less congenial to them. In the summer you might not have noticed them. Now they are conspicuous amid the withered leaves. You are inclined to approach and raise each frond in succession, moist, trembling, fragile greenness. They linger thus in all moist, clammy swamps under the bare maples and grapevines and witch hazels, and about each trickling spring that is half choked with fallen leaves. What means this persistent vitality? Why were these spared when the brakes and osmundas were stricken down? They stay as if to keep up the spirits of the cold-blooded frogs which have not yet gone into the mud, that the

summer may die with decent and graceful moderation. Is not the water of the spring improved by their presence? They fall back and droop here and there like the plumes of departing summer, of the departing year. Even in them I feel an argument for immortality. Death is so far from being universal. The same destroyer does not destroy all. How valuable they are, with the lycopodiums for cheerfulness. Greenness at the end of the year, after the fall of the leaf, a hale old age. To my eyes they are tall and noble as palm groves, and always some forest nobleness seems to have its haunt under their umbrage. All that was immortal in the swamp herbage seems here crowded into smaller compass, the concentrated greenness of the swamp. How dear they must be to the chickadee and the rabbit! the cool, slowly-retreating rear-guard of the swamp army. What virtue is theirs that enables them to resist the frost? If you are afflicted with melancholy at this season, go to the swamp, and see the brave spears of skunk-cabbage buds already advanced toward a new year. Their gravestones are not bespoken yet. Who shall be sexton to them? Is it the winter of their discontent? Do they seem to have lain down to die, despairing of skunk-cabbagedom? Mortal, human creatures must take a little respite in this fall of the year. Their spirits do

flag a little. There is a little questioning of destiny, and thinking to go like cowards to where the weary shall be at rest. But not so with the skunk cabbage. Its withered leaves fall and are transfixed by a rising bud. Winter and death are ignored. The circle of life is complete. Are these false prophets? Is it a lie or a vain boast underneath the skunk-cabbage bud pushing it upwards and lifting the dead leaves with it? They rest with spears advanced. It is good for me to be here slumping in the mud, a trap covered with withered leaves, to see these green cabbage buds lifting the dry leaves in this watery, muddy place. They see over the brow of winter's hill. They see another summer ahead.

Nov. 1, 1851. It is a rare qualification to be able to state a fact simply and adequately, to digest some experience clearly, to say "yes" and "no" with authority, to make a square edge. A man must see before he can say. Statements are made but partially. Things are said with reference to certain conventions or institutions, not absolutely. A fact, truly and absolutely stated, is taken out of the region of common sense, and acquires a mythologic or universal significance. Say it and have done with it. Express it without expressing yourself. See not with the eye of science, which is barren,

nor of youthful poetry, which is impotent. But taste the world and digest it. It would seem as if things got said but rarely and by chance. As you see, so at length will you say. When facts are seen superficially, they are seen as they lie in relation to certain institutions, perchance. I would have them expressed as more deeply seen, with deeper references, so that the hearer or reader cannot recognize them or apprehend their significance from the platform of common life, but it will be necessary that he be in a sense translated in order to understand them. At first blush, a man is not capable of reporting truth. To do that, he must be drenched and saturated with it. Then the truth will exhale from him naturally, like the odor of the muskrat from the coat of the trapper. What was enthusiasm in the young man must become temperament in the mature man. Without excitement, heat, or passion he will survey the world which excited the youth and threw him off his balance.

This on my way to Conantum, 2.30 P. M. It is a bright, clear, warm November day. I feel blessed. I love my life. I warm toward all nature. The crickets now sound faintly and from very deep in the sod. Fall dandelions look bright still. The grass has got a new greenness in spots. At this season there are stranger sparrows or finches about. The skunk cabbage

is already pushing up again. It is a remarkable day for fine gossamer cobwebs. Here in the causeway, as I walk toward the sun, I perceive that the air is full of them, streaming from off the willows and spanning the road, all stretching across the road, and yet I cannot see them in any other direction, and feel not one.

It looks as if the birds would be incommoded. This shimmer moving along the gossamer lines as they are moved by the wind, gives the effect of a drifting storm of light. It is more like a fine snowstorm which drifts athwart your path than anything else. If there were no sunshine, I should never find out that they existed, I should not know that I was bursting a myriad barriers. Why should this day be so distinguished? What is the peculiar condition of the atmosphere to call forth this activity?

The river is peculiarly sky-blue to-day, not dark as usual. It is all in the air.

Saw a canoe birch by road beyond the Abel Minot house; distinguished it thirty rods off by the chalky whiteness of its limbs. It is of a more unspotted, transparent, and perhaps pinkish white than the common. Its branches do not droop and curl down like those of the other. There will be some loose curls of bark about it. The common birch is finely branched, and has frequently a snarly head; the canoe birch is a

more open and free-growing tree. If at a distance you see the birch near its top forking into two or more white limbs, you may know it for a canoe birch. I have heard of a man in Maine who copied the whole Bible on to birch bark. It was much easier than to write that sentence which the birch tree stands for.

Nov. 1, 1852. Day before yesterday to the Cliffs in the misty rain. As I approached their edge, I saw the woods beneath, Fair Haven Pond, and the hills across the river, which owing to the mist was as far as I could see, and seemed much farther in consequence. I saw these between the converging branches of two white pines a rod or two from me on the edge of the rocks, and I thought there was no frame to a landscape equal to this, to see between two near pine boughs whose lichens are distinct, a distant forest and lake, the one, frame, the other, picture.

In November a man will eat his heart, if in any month.

It is remarkable how native man proves himself to the earth, after all, and the completeness of his life in all its appurtenances. His alliances how wide! He has domesticated not only beasts, but fowl, not only hens and geese and ducks and turkeys, but his doves winging their way to their dove-cotes over street and vil-

lage enhance the picturesqueness of his sky, to say nothing of his trained falcons, his beautiful scouts in the upper air.

He is lord of the fowl and the brute. The dove, the martin, the bluebird, the swallow, and in some countries, the hawk, have attached themselves to his fortunes.

Nov. 1, 1853. Few come to the woods to see how the pine lives and grows and spires, lifting its evergreen arms to the light, to see its perfect success. Most are content to behold it in the shape of many broad boards brought to market, and deem that its true success. The pine is no more lumber than man is, and to be made into boards and houses is no more its true and highest use than the truest use of a man is to be cut down and made into manure. A pine cut down, a dead pine, is no more a pine than a dead human carcass is a man. Is it the lumberman who is the friend and lover of the pine, stands nearest to it, and understands its nature best? Is it the tanner or turpentine distiller who posterity will fable was changed into a pine at last? No, no, it is the poet who makes the truest use of the pine, who does not fondle it with an axe, or tickle it with a saw, or stroke it with a plane. It is the poet who loves it as his own shadow in the air, and lets it stand. It is as immortal as I am, and will go to as high a heaven, there to

tower above me still. Can he who has only discovered the value of whale-bone and whale-oil be said to have discovered the true uses of the whale? Can he who slays the elephant for his ivory be said to have seen the elephant? No, these are petty and accidental uses. Just as if a stronger race were to kill us in order to make buttons and flageolets of our bones, and then prate of the usefulness of man. Every creature is better alive than dead, both men and moose and pine-trees, as life is more beautiful than death.

Nov. 1, 1855. P. M. Up Assabet, a-wooding. As I pushed up the river past Hildreth's, I saw a blue heron arise from the shore, and disappear round a bend in front; the greatest of the bitterns (*Ardeæ*), with heavy undulating wings low over the water, seen against the woods, just disappearing round a bend in front; with a great slate-colored expanse of wing, suited to the shadows of the stream, a tempered blue as of the sky and dark water commingled. This is the aspect under which the Musketaquid might be represented at this season: a long, smooth lake, reflecting the bare willows and button beeches, the stubble, and the wool grass on its tussock, a muskrat cabin or two conspicuous on its margin amid the unsightly tops of pontederia, and a bittern disappearing on undulating wing around a bend.

Nov. 1, 1857. I see much witch hazel, some of it quite fresh and bright. Its bark is alternate white and smooth reddish-brown, the small twigs looking as if gossamer had lodged on and draped them. What a lively spray it has, both in form and color! Truly it looks as if it would make divining rods, as if its twigs knew where the true gold was and could point to it. The gold is in the late blossoms. Let them alone, and they never point down to earth. They impart to the whole hillside a speckled, parti-colored look.

Nov. 1, 1858. As the afternoons grow shorter, and the early evening drives us home to complete our chores, we are reminded of the shortness of life, and become more pensive at least in this twilight of the year. We are prompted to make haste and finish our work before the twilight comes. I leaned over a rail on the Walden road, waiting for the evening mail to be distributed, when such thoughts visited me. I seemed to remember the November evening as a familiar thing come round again, and yet I could hardly tell whether I had ever known it, or only divined it. It appeared like a part of a panorama at which I sat spectator, a part with which I was perfectly familiar, just coming into view. I foresaw how it would look and roll along and was prepared to be pleased. Just such a piece

of art merely, though infinitely sweet and grand, did it appear to me, and just as little were any active duties required of me. We are independent of all that we see. The hangman whom I have *seen* cannot hang me. The earth which I have *seen* cannot bury me. Such doubleness and distance does *sight* prove. Only the rich and such as are troubled with ennui are implicated in the maze of phenomena. You cannot see anything until you are clear of it. The long railroad causeway through the meadows west of me, the still twilight, the dark bank of clouds in the horizon, the villagers crowding to the post-office, and then hastening home to supper by candlelight, had I not seen all this before? What new sweet was I to extract from it? Truly they mean that we should learn our lesson well. Nature gets thumbed like an old spelling book. Yet I sat the bench with perfect contentment, unwilling to exchange the familiar vision that was to be unrolled for any treasure or heaven that could be imagined. I was no nearer to or farther off from my friends. We were sure to keep just so far apart in our orbits still, in obedience to the laws of attraction and repulsion, affording each other only steady, but indispensable starlight. It was as if I was promised the greatest novelty the world has ever seen or shall see, though the utmost possible novelty would be the difference

between me and myself a year ago. This alone encouraged me, and was my fuel for the approaching winter. That we may behold the panorama with this slight improvement or change, this is what we sustain life for from year to year. And yet there is no more tempting novelty than this new November. No going to Europe or to another world is to be named with it. Give me the old familiar walk, post-office and all, with this ever new self, with this infinite expectation and faith which does not know when it is beaten. We 'll go nutting once more. We 'll pluck the nut of the world and crack it in the winter evenings. Theatres and all other sight-seeing are puppet shows in comparison. I will take another walk to the cliff, another row on the river, another skate on the meadow, be out in the first snow, and associate with the winter birds. Here I am at home. In the bare and bleached crust of the earth, I recognize my friend. One actual Frederick that you know is worth a million only read of. Pray, am I altogether a bachelor, or am I a widower, that I should go away and "leave my bride"? This morrow that is ever knocking with irresistible force at our door, there is no such guest as that. I will stay at home and receive company. I want nothing new. If I can have but a tithe of the old secured to me, I will spurn all wealth

besides. Think of the consummate folly of attempting to go away from *here*. Here are all the friends I ever had or shall have, and as friendly as ever. Why, I never had a quarrel with a friend, but it was just as sweet as unanimity could be. I do not think we budge an inch forward or backward in relation to our friends. How many things can you go away from? They see the comet from the northwest coast just as plainly as we do, and the same stars through its tail. Take the shortest way round and stay at home. A man dwells in his native valley like a corolla in its calyx, like an acorn in its cup. Here, of course, is all that you love, all that you expect, all that you are. Here is your bride-elect, as close to you as she can be got. Here is all the best and the worst you can imagine. What more do you want? Foolish people think that what they imagine is somewhere else. That stuff is not made in any factory but their own.

Nov. 1, 1860. A perfect Indian summer day, wonderfully warm, 72°+ at 1 P. M., probably warmer at 2. The butterflies are out again. I see the common yellow one, and the *Vanessa antiopa*, also yellow-winged grasshoppers with blackish eyes.

Nov. 2, 1840. It is well said that the "attitude of inspection is prone." The soul does

not inspect, but behold. Like the lily, or the crystal, or the rock, it looks in the face of the sky. Francis Howell says that in garrulous persons "the supply of thought seems never to rise much above the level of its exit." Consequently their thoughts issue in no jets, but incessantly dribble. In those who speak rarely, but to the purpose, the reservoir of thought is many feet higher than its issue. It takes the pressure of one hundred atmospheres to make one jet of eloquence.

Nov. 2, 1851. Saw a canoe birch beyond Nawshawtuck, growing out of the middle of a white-pine stump which still showed the marks of the axe; sixteen inches in diameter at its bottom, or at two feet from the ground where it had first taken root in the stump.

Nov. 2, 1852. Tall buttercups, red clover, houstonias, *Polygonum aviculare*, still. The month of chickadees and new swollen buds. At long intervals I see or hear a robin still.

Nov. 2, 1853. The beech leaves have all fallen except some about the lower part of the trees, and they make a fine thick bed on the ground. They are very beautiful, fine and perfect leaves, unspotted, not eaten by insects, of a handsome, clear leather color, like a book bound in calf, crisp and elastic. They cover the ground so perfectly and cleanly as to tempt you to

recline on it, and admire the beauty of the smooth boles from that position, covered with lichens of various colors, green, etc. They impress you as full of health and vigor, so that their bark can hardly contain their spirits, but lies in folds or wrinkles about their ankles like a sock, with the *embonpoint* of infancy, — wrinkles of fat.

Nov. 2, 1854. P. M. By boat to Clamshell. I see larks hovering over the meadow, and hear a faint note or two, and a pleasant note from tree sparrows (?). Sailing past the bank above the railroad, close to the shore on the east side, just before a clear sunset, I see a fainter shadow of the boat, sail, myself, paddle, etc., directly above and upon the first, on the bank. What makes the second? I at length discovered that it was the reflected sun which cast a higher shadow like the true one. As I moved to the west side, the upper shadow grew larger and less perceptible, and at last when I was so near the west shore that I could not see the reflected sun, it disappeared, but then there appeared one upside down in its place!

Nov. 2, 1857. P. M. To Bateman's Pond. It is very pleasant and cheerful nowadays, when the brown and withered leaves strew the ground and almost every plant is fallen or withered, to come upon a patch of polypody (as

in abundance on hillside between Calla swamp and Bateman's Pond) on some rocky hillside in the woods, where in the midst of dry and rustling leaves, defying frost, it stands so freshly green and full of life. The mere greenness, which was not remarkable in the summer, is positively interesting now. My thoughts are with the polypody a long time after my body has passed. The brakes, the sarsaparilla, the osmundas, the Solomon's-seals, the lady's-slippers, etc., have long since withered and fallen. The huckleberries and blueberries, too, have lost their leaves. The forest floor is covered with a thick coat of moist brown leaves, but what is that perennial and spring-like verdure that clothes the rocks, of small green plumes pointing various ways? It is the cheerful community of the polypody. It survives at least as the type of vegetation, to remind us of the spring which shall not fail. These are the green pastures where I browse now. Why is not this form copied by our sculptors instead of the foreign acanthus leaves and bays? How fit for a tuft about the base of a column! The sight of this unwithering green leaf excites me like red at some seasons. Are not wood-frogs the philosophers who frequent these groves? Methinks I imbibe a cool, composed, frog-like philosophy when I behold them. The form of the

polypody is strangely interesting, it is even outlandish. Some forms, though common in our midst, are thus perennially foreign as the growth of other latitudes. We all feel the ferns to be further from us essentially and sympathetically than the phænogamous plants, the roses and weeds, for instance. It needs no geology nor botany to assure us of that. The bare outline of the polypody thrills me strangely. It only piques me. Simple as it is, it is as strange as an Oriental character. It is quite independent of my race and of the Indian, and of all mankind. It is a fabulous, mythological form, such as prevailed when the earth and air and water were inhabited by those extinct fossil creatures that we find. It is contemporary with them, and affects us somewhat as the sight of them might do. Crossed over that high, flat-backed, rocky hill, where the rocks, as usual thereabouts, stand on their edges, and the grain, running by compass east-northeast and west-southwest, is frequently kinked up in a curious manner, reminding me of a curly head. Call the hill Curly-pate.

Returning I see the red oak on R. W. E.'s shore reflected in the bright sky water. In the reflection, the tree is black against the clear whitish sky, though as I see it against the opposite woods, it is a warm greenish yellow. But

the river sees it against the bright sky and hence the reflection is like ink. The water tells me how it looks to it, seen from below.

I think that most men, as farmers, hunters, fishers, etc., walk along a river bank, or paddle along its stream without seeing the reflections. Their minds are not enough abstracted from the surface, from surfaces generally. It is only a reflecting mind that sees reflections. I am aware often that I have been occupied with shallow and commonplace thoughts, looking for something superficial, when I did not see the most glorious reflections, though exactly in the line of my vision. If the fisherman were looking at the reflection, he would not know when he had a nibble. I know from my own experience that he may cast his line right over the most elysian landscape and sky, and not catch the slightest notion of them. You must be in an abstract mood to see reflections, however distinct. I was even startled by the sight of that reflected red oak, as if it were a black water-spirit. When we are enough abstracted, the opaque earth itself reflects images to us, that is, we are imaginative, see visions.

Nov. 3, 1839. If one would reflect, let him embark on some placid stream, and float with the current. He cannot resist the muse. As we ascend the stream, plying the paddle with

might and main, snatched and impetuous thoughts course through the brain. We dream of conflict, power and grandeur; but turn the prow down stream, and rock, tree, kine, knoll, assuming new and varying positions, as wind and water shift the scene, favor the liquid lapse of thought, far-reaching and sublime, but ever calm and gently undulating.

Nov. 3, 1840. The truth is only contained, never withheld, as a feudal castle may be the headquarters of hospitality, though the portal is but a span in the circuit of the wall. So of the three envelopes of the cocoanut, one is always so soft that it may be pierced with a thorn, and the traveler is grateful for the thick shell which held the liquor so faithfully.

Nov. 3, 1853. I make it my business to extract from Nature whatever nutriment she can furnish me, though at the risk of endless iteration. I milk the sky and the earth.

A man of many ideas and associations must pine in the woods. At the extreme north, the voyagers have to dance and act plays for employment. There is not enough of the garden in the wilderness, though I love to see a man sometimes from whom the usnea will hang as naturally as from a spruce. Our woods and fields are the perfection of parks and groves, and gardens and grottoes and arbors, and paths and parterres,

and vistas and landscapes. They are the natural consequence of what art and refinement we as a people have. They are the common which each village possesses, the true paradise, in comparison with which all elaborately and willfully wealth-constructed parks and gardens are paltry imitations. No other creature effects such changes in nature as man. He changes by his presence the nature of the very trees. The poet's is not a logger's path, but a woodman's. The pioneer and logger have preceded him, and banished decaying wood and the spongy mosses which feed on it, and built hearths, and humanized nature for him.

Nov. 3, 1857. As I return down the Boulder Field, I see, between two of the boulders which are a dozen rods from me, a dozen feet high and nearly as much apart, the now winter-colored — that is, reddish (of oak leaves) — horizon of hills with its few white houses, four or five miles distant southward, as a landscape within the frame of a picture. But what a picture-frame! These two great slumbering masses of rock, reposing like a pair of mastodons on the surface of the pasture, completely shutting out a mile of the horizon on each side, while between their adjacent sides, which are nearly perpendicular, I look to the now purified, dry, reddish, leafy horizon, with a faint tinge of blue from the distance.

To see a remote landscape between two near rocks! I want no other gilding to my picture frame. There they lie as perchance they tumbled and split from off an iceberg. What better frame would you have? The globe itself, here named pasture, for ground and foreground, two great boulders for the sides of the frame, and the sky itself for the top. And for artist and subject, God and Nature! Such pictures cost nothing but eyes, and it will not bankrupt me to own them. They were not stolen by any conqueror as spoils of war, and none can doubt but they are really the works of an old master. What more, pray, will you see between any two slips of gilded wood in that pasture you call Europe and browse in sometimes? It is singular that several of these rocks should be thus split into twins. Even very low ones, just appearing above the surface, are divided and parallel, having a path between them.

Nov. 3, 1858. The jay is the bird of October. I have seen it repeatedly flitting amid the bright leaves, of a different color from them all, and equally bright, taking its flight from grove to grove. It, too, with its bright color, stands for some ripeness in the bird harvest; and its scream! it is as if it blew on the edge of an October leaf. It is never more in its element and at home than when flitting amid these bril-

liant colors. No doubt it delights in bright color, and so has begged for itself a brilliant coat. It is not gathering seeds from the sod, too busy to look around, while fleeing the country. It is wide awake to what is going on, on the qui vive. It flies to some bright tree and bruits its splendors abroad.

At base of Anursnack I find one or two fringed gentians yet open, but even the stems are generally killed.

How long we follow an illusion! On meeting that one whom I call my friend, I find that I had imagined something that was not there. I am sure to depart sadder than I came. Nothing makes me so dejected as to have met my friends, for they make me doubt if it is possible to have any friends. I feel what a fool I am. I cannot conceive of persons more strange to me than they *actually* are; not thinking, not believing, not doing as I do; interrupted by me. My only distinction must be that I am the greatest bore they ever had. Not in a single thought agreed, regularly balking one another. But when I get far away, my thoughts return to them. That is the way I can visit them. Perhaps it is unaccountable to me why I care for them. Thus I am taught that my friend is not an actual person. When I have withdrawn and am alone, I forget the actual person, and remember only my

ideal. Then I have a friend again. I am not so ready to perceive the illusion that is in Nature. I certainly come nearer, to say the least, to an actual and joyful intercourse with her. Every day I have more or less communion with her, *as I think.* At least, I do not feel as if I must withdraw out of nature. I feel like a welcome guest. Yet, strictly speaking, the same must be true of nature and of man; our ideal is the only real. It is not the finite and temporal that satisfies or concerns us in either case.

I associate the idea of friendship, methinks, with the person the most foreign to me. This illusion is perpetuated like superstition in a country long after civilization has been reached. We are attracted toward a particular person, but no one has discovered the laws of this attraction. When I come nearest to that one *actually*, I am wont to be surprised at my selection. It may be enough that we have met *some time*, and now can never forget it. Some time or other we paid each other this wonderful compliment, looked largely, humanely, divinely on one another, and now are fated to be acquaintances forever. In the case of nature, I am not so conscious of this unsatisfied yearning.

Nov. 3, 1861. After a violent easterly storm in the night, which clears at noon, I notice that

the surface of the railroad causeway composed of gravel is singularly marked, as if stratified, like some slate rocks on their edges, so that I can tell within a small fraction of a degree from what quarter the rain came. These lines, as it were of stratification, are perfectly parallel and straight as a ruler diagonally across the flat surface of the causeway for its whole length. Behind each little pebble, as a protecting boulder one eighth or one tenth of an inch in diameter, extends northwest a ridge of sand, an inch or more, which it has protected from being washed away, while the heavy drops driven almost horizontally have washed out a furrow on each side, and on all sides are these ridges, half an inch apart and perfectly parallel. All this is perfectly distinct to an observant eye, and yet could easily pass unnoticed by most. Thus each wind is self-registering.

Nov. 4, 1840. By your few words, show how insufficient would be many words. If, after conversation, I would reinstate my thought in its primary dignity and authority, I have recourse again to my first simple and concise statement. In breadth we may be patterns of conciseness, but in depth we may well be prolix.

Dr. Ware, Jr., said to-day in his speech at the meeting-house, "There are these three, sympathy, faith, patience;" then proceeding in true

ministerial style, "and the greatest of these is," but for a moment he was at a loss, and became a listener along with his audience, and concluded with, "Which is it? I don't know, pray take them all, brethren, and God help you."

Nov. 4, 1851. To Saw Mill Brook by turnpike, returning by Walden. It was quite a discovery when I first came upon this brawling mountain stream in Concord woods, for some fifty or sixty rods of its course as much obstructed by rocks, rocks out of all proportion to its tiny stream, as a brook can well be; and the rocks are bared throughout the wood on either side, as if a torrent had anciently swept through here, so unlike the after character of the stream. Who would have thought that in tracing it up from where it empties into the larger Mill Brook in the open peat meadows, it would conduct him to such a headlong and impetuous youth. Perchance it should be called a "force." It suggests what various moods may attach to the same character. Ah, if I but knew that some minds, which flow so muddily in the lowland portion of their course, where they cross the highways, tumbled thus impetuously and musically, mixing themselves with the air in foam, but a little way back in the woods! that these dark and muddy pools where only the pout and the leech are to be found, issued from pure trout streams higher

up! that the man's thoughts ever flowed as sparkling mountain water, that trout there loved to glance through his dimples, where the witch-hazel hangs over his stream! This stream is here sometimes quite lost amid the rocks, which appear as if they had been arched over it, but which it in fact has undermined and found its way beneath, and they have merely fallen arch-wise, as they were undermined. It is truly a raw and gusty day, and I hear a tree creak sharply like a bird, a phœbe. The hypericums stand red or lake over the brook. The jays with their scream are at home in the scenery. I see where trees have spread themselves over the rocks in a scanty covering of soil, been under-mined by the brook, then blown over, and, as they fell, lifted and carried with them all the soil, together with considerable rocks. So from time to time by these natural levers rocks are re-moved from the middle of the stream to the shore. The slender chestnuts, maples, elms, and white ash trees, which last are uncommonly numerous here, are now all bare of leaves, and a few small hemlocks, with their now thin but unmixed and fresh green foliage, stand over and cheer the stream, and remind me of winter, the snows which are to come and drape them and contrast with their green, and the chickadees that are to flit and lisp amid them. Ah, the

beautiful tree, the hemlock, with its green canopy, under which little grows, not exciting the cupidity of the carpenter, whose use most men have not discovered. I know of some memorable ones worth walking many miles to see. These little cheerful hemlocks, the lisp of chickadees seems to come from them now, each standing with its foot on the very edge of the stream, reaching sometimes part way over its channel, and here and there one has lightly stepped across. These evergreens are plainly as much for shelter for the birds as for anything else. The fallen leaves are so thick they almost fill the bed of the stream and choke it. I hear the runnel gurgling under ground. As if the busy rill had ever tossed these rocks about! these storied rocks with their fine lichens and sometimes red stains as of Indian blood on them. There are a few bright ferns lying flat by the sides of the brook, but it is cold, cold, withering to all else. A whitish lichen on the witch-hazel rings it here. I glimpse the frizzled tail of a red squirrel with a chestnut in its mouth, on a white pine.

The ants appear to be gone into winter quarters. Here are two bushels of fine gravel, piled up in a cone, overpowering the grass, which tells of a corresponding cavity.

Nov. 4, 1852. Autumnal dandelion and yar-

row. Must be out of doors enough to get experience of wholesome reality, as a ballast to thought and sentiment. Health requires this relaxation, this aimless life, this life in the present. Let a man have thought what he will of Nature in the house, she will still be novel out-doors. I keep out of doors for the sake of the mineral, vegetable, and animal in me.

How precious a fine day early in the spring; less so in the fall, less still in the summer and winter.

My thought is a part of the meaning of the world, and hence I use a part of the world as a symbol to express my thought.

Nov. 4, 1855. It takes a savage or wild taste to appreciate a wild apple. I remember two old maids to whose house I enjoyed carrying a purchaser to talk about buying their farm in the winter, because they offered us wild apples, though with an unnecessary apology for their wildness.

Nov. 4, 1857. To Pine Hill via Spanish Brook. I leave the railroad at Walden Crossing, and follow the path to Spanish Brook. How swift Nature is to repair the damage that man does! When he has cut down a tree, and left only a white-topped and bleeding stump, she comes at once to the rescue with her chemistry, and covers it decently with a first coat of gray,

and in course of time she adds a thick coat of green-cup and bright coxcomb lichens, and it becomes an object of new interest to the lover of nature! Suppose it were always to remain a raw stump instead! It becomes a shelf on which this humble vegetation spreads and displays itself, and we forget the death of the larger in the life of the less.

I see in the path some rank thimble-berry shoots covered very thickly with their peculiar hoary bloom. It is only rubbed off in a few places down to the purple skin, by some passing hunter perchance. It is a very singular and delicate outer coat surely for a plant to wear. I find that I can write my name on it with a pointed stick very distinctly, each stroke, however fine, going down to the purple. It is a new kind of enameled card. What is this bloom and what purpose does it serve? Is there anything analogous in animated nature? It is the *coup de grace*, the last touch and perfection of any work, a thin elysian veil cast over it, through which it may be viewed. It is breathed on it by the artist, and thereafter his work is not to be touched without injury. It is the evidence of a ripe and completed work on which the unexhausted artist has breathed out of his superfluous genius. If it is a poem, it must be invested with a similar bloom by the imagination

of the reader. It is the subsidence of superfluous ripeness, like a fruit preserved in its own sugar. It is the handle by which the imagination grasps it.

I climb Pine Hill just as the sun is setting this cool evening. As I sit with my back to a thick oak sprout whose leaves still glow with life, Walden lies, an oblong figure, below, endwise toward me. Its surface is slightly rippled, and dusky prolonged reflections extend wholly across its length, or half a mile. (I sit high.) The sun is once or twice its diameter above the horizon, and the mountains north of it stand out grand and distinct, a decided purple. But when I look critically, I distinguish a whitish mist (such is the color of the denser air) about their lower parts, while their tops are dark blue. (So the mountains have their bloom, and is not the bloom on fruits equivalent to that blue veil of air which distance gives to many objects?) I see one glistening reflection on the dusky and leafy northwestern earth, seven or eight miles off, betraying a window there, though no house can be seen. It twinkles incessantly as from a waving surface, owing probably to the undulation of the air. Now that the sun is actually setting, the mountains are dark blue from top to bottom. As usual, a small cloud attends the sun to the portals of the day, and reflects his

brightness to us now that he is gone. But those grand and glorious mountains, how impossible to remember daily that they are there, and to live accordingly. They are meant to be a perpetual reminder to us, pointing out the way.

Nov. 4, 1858. On the 1st, when I stood on Poplar Hill, I saw a man far off by the edge of the river, splitting billets off a stump. Suspecting who it was, I took out my glass, and beheld Goodwin, the one-eyed Ajax, in his short blue frock, short and square-bodied, as broad as for his height he can afford to be, getting his winter's wood, for this is one of the phenomena of the season. As surely as the ants which he disturbs go into winter quarters in the stump when the weather becomes cool, so does Goodwin revisit the stumpy shores with his axe. As usual, his powder flask peeped out from a pocket on his breast, and his gun was slanted over a stump near by, and his boat lay a little farther along. He had been at work laying wall still farther off, and now, near the end of the day, he took himself to those pursuits which he loved better still. It would be no amusement to me to see a gentleman buy his winter wood. It is, to see Goodwin get his. I helped him tip over a stump or two. He said the owner of the land had given him leave to get them out, but it seemed to me a condescension for him to ask any man's

leave to grub up these stumps. The stumps to those who can use them, I say, to those who will split them. He might as well ask leave of the farmer to shoot the musquash and the meadow hen. I might as well ask leave to look at the landscape. Near by were large hollows in the ground, now grassed over, where he had got out white-oak stumps in previous years. But strange to say, the town does not like to have him get his fuel in this way. They would rather the stumps should rot in the ground, or be floated down stream to the sea. They have, almost without dissent, agreed on a different mode of living, with their division of labor. They would have him stick to laying wall, and buy corded wood for fuel as they do. He has drawn up an old bridge sleeper, and cut his name on it for security, and now he gets into his boat and pushes off, saying he will go and see what Mr. Musquash is about.

Nov. 5, 1839. Æschylus. There was one man who lived his own healthy Attic life in those days. His words that have come down to us give evidence that their speaker was a seer in his day and generation. At this day they owe nothing to their dramatic form, nothing to stage machinery and the fact that they were spoken under these or those circumstances. All display of art for the gratification of a factitious

taste, is silently passed by to come at the least particle of absolute and genuine thought they contain. The reader will be disappointed, however, who looks for traits of a rare wisdom or eloquence, and will have to solace himself, for the most part, with the poet's humanity, and what it was in him to say. He will discover that, like every genius, he was a solitary liver and worker in his day.

We are accustomed to say that the common-sense of this age belonged to the seer of the last, as if time gave us any vantage ground. But not so; I see not but genius must ever take an equal start. . . . Common-sense is not so familiar with any truth, but genius will represent that truth in a strange light to it. Let the seer bring his broad eye down to the most stale and trivial fact, and he will make you believe it a new planet in the sky.

We are not apt to remember that we grow. It is curious to reflect how the maiden waits patiently and confidingly as the tender houstonia of the meadow for the slowly revolving years to work their will with her, to perfect and ripen her, like it to be fanned by the wind, watered by the rain, shined on by the sun, as if she, too, were a plant drawing in sustenance by a thousand roots and fibres. These young buds of mankind in the street are like buttercups in the meadows, surrendered to nature as they.

Nov. 5, 1840. Truth is as vivacious, and will spread itself as fast, as the fungi, which you can by no means annihilate with your heel, for their sporules are so infinitely numerous and subtle as to resemble "thin smoke, so light that they may be raised into an atmosphere, and dispersed in so many ways by the attraction of the sun, by insects, wind, elasticity, adhesion, etc.; that it is difficult to conceive a place from which they may be excluded."

Nov. 5, 1853. Most of the muskrat cabins were lately covered by the flood, but now that it is gone down in a great measure, I notice that they have not been washed away or much injured, as a heap of manure would have been, they are so artificially constructed; moreover, for the most part, they are protected as well as concealed by the button-bushes, willows, or weeds about them. What exactly are they for? This is not the breeding season of the muskrat. I think they are merely an artificial bank or air chamber near the water, houses of refuge. But why do they need them more at this season than in summer? it might be asked. Perhaps they are constructed just before the rise of the water in the fall and winter, that they may not have to swim so far as the flood would require in order to eat their clams.

Nov. 5, 1855. I hate the present modes of

living and getting a living. Farming and shop-keeping and working at a trade or profession, are all odious to me. I should relish getting my living in a simple, primitive fashion. The life which society proposes to me to live is so artificial and complex, bolstered up on many weak supports, and sure to topple down at last, that no man surely can ever be inspired to live it, and only "old fogies" ever praise it. At best some think it their duty to live it. I believe in the infinite joy and satisfaction of helping myself and others to the extent of my ability. But what is the use in trying to live simply, raising what you eat, making what you wear, building what you inhabit, burning what you cut and dig, when those to whom you are allied outwardly, want and will have a thousand other things which neither you nor they can raise, and nobody else, perchance, will pay for. The fellow-man to whom you are yoked is a steer that is ever bolting right the other way. I was suggesting once to a man who was wincing under some of the consequences of our loose and expensive way of living, "But you might raise your own potatoes," etc. We had often done it at our house and had some to sell. At which he demurring, I said, setting it high, "You could raise twenty bushels even." But said he, "I use thirty-five." "How large is your family?"

"A wife and three infant children." This was the real family. I need not enumerate those who were hired to help eat the potatoes and waste them. So he had to hire a man to raise his potatoes. Thus men invite the devil in, at every angle, and then prate about the Garden of Eden and the fall of man. I know many children to whom I would fain make a present on some one of their birthdays, but they are so far gone in the luxury of presents, have such perfect museums of costly ones, that it would absorb my entire earnings for a year to buy them something which would not be beneath their notice.

That white birch fungus always presents its face to the ground, parallel with it, for here are some on an upright dead birch whose faces or planes are at right angles with the axis of the tree, as usual, looking down, but others, attached to the top of the tree which lies prostrate on the ground, have their planes parallel with the axis of the tree, as if looking round the birch.

Nov. 5, 1857. Sometimes I would rather get a transient glimpse or side view of a thing than stand fronting it, as with these polypodies. The object I caught a glimpse of as I went by, haunts my thought a long time, is infinitely suggestive, and I do not care to front it and scrutinize it, for I know that the thing that really concerns me is not there, but in my relation to that

That is a mere reflecting surface. It is not the polypody in my pitcher or herbarium, or which I may possibly persuade to grow on a bank in my yard, or which is described in the botanies, that interests me, but the one I pass by in my walks a little distance off, when in the right mood. Its influence is sporadic, wafted through the air to me. Do you imagine its fruit to stick to the back of the leaf all winter? At this season polypody is in the air. It is worth the while to walk in swamps now, to bathe your eyes in greenness. The terminal-shield fern is the handsomest and glossiest green.

I think the man of science makes the mistake, and the mass of mankind along with him, to suppose that you should give your chief attention to the phenomenon which excites you, as something independent of you, and not as it is related to you. The important fact is its effect on me. The man of science thinks I have no business to see anything else but just what he defines the rainbow to be, but I care not whether my vision is a waking thought or a dream remembered, whether it is seen in the light or in the dark. It is the subject of the vision, the truth alone that concerns me. The philosopher for whom rainbows, etc., can be explained away never saw them.

Nov. 5, 1858. The *Cornus florida* on the

Island is still full-leafed, and is now completely scarlet, though it was partly green on the twenty-eighth [of October]. It is apparently in the height of its color there now, or if more exposed perhaps it would have been on the first of November. This makes it the latest tree to change.

Nov. 5, 1860. I am struck by the fact that the more slowly trees grow at first, the sounder they are at the core, and I think the same is true of human beings. We do not wish to see children precocious, making great strides in their early years, like sprouts producing a soft and perishable timber, but better if they expand slowly at first, as if contending with difficulties, and so are solidified and perfected. Such trees continue and expand with nearly equal rapidity to an extreme old age.

Nov. 6, 1853. Climbed the wooded hill by Holden's spruce swamp, and got a novel view of the river and Fair Haven Bay through the almost leafless woods. How much handsomer a river or lake such as ours seen thus through a foreground of scattered or else partially leafless trees, though at a considerable distance this side of it, especially if the water is open, without a wooded shore or isles. It is the most perfect and beautiful of all frames, which yet the sketcher is commonly careful to brush aside. I mean a pretty thick foreground, a view of the

distant water through the near forest, through a thousand little vistas, as we are rushing towards the former, that intimate mingling of wood and water which excites an expectation that the near and open view rarely realizes. We prefer that some part be concealed which our imagination may navigate.

Nov. 6, 1857. Minott is a very pleasing figure in nature. He improves any scenery, he and his comrades, Harry Hooper, John Wyman, Oliver Williams, etc. If he gets into a pond hole, he disturbs it no more than a water spirit for me.

Nov. 7, 1839. We are not commonly aware that there is a rising as well as a risen generation. It is a fact which we do not commonly allow for or remember, the growing men or women who would disturb many a fair theory. Speak for yourself, old man. By what degrees of consanguinity is this succulent and rank-growing slip of manhood related to me? What is it but another herb, ranging all the kingdoms of Nature, drawing its sustenance by a thousand roots and fibres from all soils!

Nov. 7, 1840.

> I 'm guided in the darkest night
> By flashes of auroral light,
> Which overdart thy eastern home,
> And teach me not in vain to roam.

Thy steady light on t' other side
Pales the sunset, makes day abide,
And after sunrise, stays the dawn,
Forerunner of a brighter morn.

. . . . . .

When others laugh, I am not glad,
When others cry, I am not sad.

. . . . . .

I am a miser without blame,
Am conscience-stricken without shame,
An idler am I without leisure,
A busybody without pleasure.
I did not think so bright a day
Would issue in so dark a night,
I did not think such sober play
Would leave me in so sad a plight,
And I should be most sorely spent,
When first I was most innocent.

I thought by loving all beside,
To prove to you my love was wide,
And by the rites I soared above,
To show you my peculiar love.

Nov. 7, 1853. Three bluebirds still braving the cold winds, Acton Blues. Their blue uniform makes me think of soldiers who have received orders to keep the field and not go into winter quarters.

A muskrat's house on the top of a rock; [the soil?] too thin round the sides for a passage beneath, yet a small cavity at top, which makes me think they use them merely as a sheltered perch above water. They seize thus many

cones to build on, as a hummock left by the ice. The wads of which this muskrat's house was composed were about six inches by four, rounded and massed at one end and flaking off at the other, and were composed chiefly of a little green moss-like weed, for the most part withered dark-brown, and having the strong odor of the fresh water sponge and conferva.

Nov. 7, 1855. I find it good to be out in this still, dark, mizzling afternoon. My walk or voyage is more suggestive and profitable than in bright weather. The view is contracted by the misty rain. The water is perfectly smooth, and the stillness is favorable to reflection. I am more open to impressions, more sensitive, not calloused or indurated by sun and wind, as if in a chamber still. My thoughts are concentrated. I am all compact. The solitude is real, too, for the weather keeps other men at home. This mist is like a roof and walls, over and around, and I walk with a domestic feeling. The sound of a wagon going over an unseen bridge is louder than ever, and so of other sounds. I am compelled to look at near objects. All things have a soothing effect. The very clouds and mists brood over me. My power of observation and contemplation is much increased. My attention does not wander. The world and my life are simplified. What now are Europe and Asia?

Nov. 7, 1857. Minott adorns whatever part of nature he touches. Whichever way he walks he transfigures the earth for me. If a common man speaks of Walden Pond to me, I see only a shallow, dull-colored body of water, without reflections, or peculiar color, but if Minott speaks of it, I see the green water and reflected hills at once, for he *has been* there. I hear the rustle of leaves from woods which he goes through.

This has been another Indian-summer day. Thermometer 58° at noon.

Nov. 7, 1858. P. M. To Bateman's Pond. I leave my boat opposite the hemlocks, and as I glance upwards between them, seeing the bare but bright hillside beyond, I think, Now we are left to the hemlocks and pines with their silvery light, to the bare trees and withered grass. The very rocks and stones in the rocky road (that beyond Farmer's) look white in the clear November light, especially after the rain. We are left to the chickadee's familiar notes, and the jay for trumpeter. What struck me was a certain emptiness beyond, between the hemlocks and the hill, in the cool washed air, as if I appreciated the absence of insects from it. It suggested agreeably to me a mere space in which to walk briskly. The fields are, as it were, vacated. The very earth is like a house shut up for the winter, and I go knocking about

it in vain. But just then I heard a chickadee in a hemlock, and was inexpressibly cheered to find that an old acquaintance was yet stirring about the premises, and was, I was assured, to be there all winter. All that is evergreen in me revived at once.

The very moss (the little pine moss) in Hosmer's meadow is revealed by its greenness amid the withered grass and stubble.

Going up the lane beyond Farmer's, I was surprised to see fly up from the white stony ground two snow buntings, which alighted again close by. They had pale brown or tawny touches on the white breast, on each side of the head and on top of the head, in the last place with some darker color. Had light yellowish bills. They sat quite motionless within two rods, and allowed me to approach within a rod, as if conscious that the white rocks, etc., concealed them. It seemed as if they were attracted to our faces of the same color with themselves. One squatted flat, if not both. Their soft rippling notes, as they went off, reminded me of the northeast snowstorms to which erelong they are to be an accompaniment.

Looking southwest toward the pond just before sunset, I saw against the light what I took to be a shad-bush in full bloom, but without a leaflet. I was prepared for this sight after the

very warm autumn, because this tree frequently puts forth leaves in October. Or it might be a young wild apple. Hastening to it, I found it was only the feathery seeds of the Virgin's Bower [*Clematis Virginiana*], whose vine, so close to the branches, was not noticeable. They looked just like dense umbels of white flowers, and in this light, three or four rods off, were fully as light as white apple-blossoms. It is singular how one thing thus puts on the semblance of another. I thought at first I had made a discovery more interesting than the blossoming of apple trees in the fall. It carried me round to spring again, when the shad-bush, almost leafless, is seen waving its white blossoms amid the yet bare trees, the feathery masses, at intervals along the twigs, just like umbels of apple bloom, so caught and reflected the western light.

I pass a musquash house, apparently begun last night. The first mouthfuls of weeds were placed between some small button-bush stems which stood amid the pads and pontederia for a support, and to prevent their being washed away. Opposite I see some half concealed amid the bleached phalaris grass (a tall coarse grass), or, in some places, the blue joint.

Nov. 8, 1850. The stillness of the woods and fields is remarkable at this season of the

year. There is not even the creak of a cricket to be heard. Of myriads of dry shrub-oak leaves, not one rustles. Your own breath can stir them, yet the breath of heaven does not suffice to. The trees have the aspect of waiting for winter. The sprouts which had shot up so vigorously to repair the damage which the choppers had done, have stopped short for the winter. Everything stands silent and expectant. If I listen, I hear only the note of a chickadee, our most common bird at present, most identified with our forests, or perchance the scream of a jay, or from the solemn depths of the woods I hear tolling far away the knell of one departed. Thought rushes in to fill the vacuum. As you walk, however, the partridge bursts away from the foot of a shrub oak, like its own dry fruit; immortal bird! This sound still startles us. The silent, dry, almost leafless, certainly fruitless woods, you wonder what cheer that bird can find in them.

Nov. 8, 1851. Ah, those sun-sparkles on Dudley Pond in this November air, what a heaven to live in! Intensely brilliant as no artificial light I have seen, like a dance of diamonds, coarse mazes of the diamond dance seen through the trees. All objects shine to-day, even the sportsmen seen at a distance, as if a cavern were unroofed, and its crystals gave

entertainment to the sun. This great see-saw of brilliants, the ἀνήριθμον γέλασμα. The squirrels that run across the road sport their tails like banners. When I saw the bare sand at Cochituate, I felt my relation to the soil. These are my sands not yet run out. Not yet will the fates turn the glass. In this sand my bones will gladly lie. Like the *Viola pedata*, I shall be ready to bloom again here in my Indian-summer days. Here, ever springing, never dying, with perennial root I stand, for the winter of the land is warm to me. When I see the earth's sands thrown up from beneath its surface, it touches me inwardly, it reminds me of my origin, for I am such a plant, so native to New England, methinks, as springs from the sand cast up from below.

Nov. 8, 1853. 10 A. M. Our first snow. The children greet it with a shout, when they come out at recess. P. M. It begins to whiten the plowed ground now, but has not overcome the russet of the grass ground. Birds generally wear the russet dress of nature at this season. They have their fall, no less than the plants. The bright tints depart from their foliage or feathers, and they flit past like withered leaves in rustling flocks. The sparrow is a withered leaf. Perchance I heard the last cricket of the season yesterday, — they chirp here and there at

longer and longer intervals till the snow quenches their song, — and the last striped squirrel, too, perchance, yesterday. They then do not go into winter quarters till the ground is covered with snow.

The partridges go off with a whirr, and then sail a long way, level and low, through the woods with that impetus they have got, displaying their neat forms perfectly.

Nov. 8, 1857. A warm, cloudy, rain-threatening morning. About 10 A. M., a long flock of geese are going over from northeast to southwest, or parallel with the general direction of the coast, and great mountain ranges. The sonorous, quavering sounds of the geese are the voice of the cloudy air, a sound that comes from directly between us and the sky, an aerial sound, and yet so distinct, heavy and sonorous; a clanking chain drawn through the heavy air. I saw through my window some children looking up, and pointing their tiny bows into the heavens, and I knew at once that the geese were in the air. It is always an exciting event. The children, instinctively aware of its importance, rushed into the house to tell their parents. These travelers are revealed to you by the upward-turned gaze of men. And though these undulating lines are melting into the southwestern sky, the sound comes clear and distinct to you as the

clank of a chain in a neighboring stithy. So they migrate, not flying from hedge to hedge, but from latitude to latitude, from state to state, steering boldly out into the ocean of the air. It is remarkable how these large objects, so plain when your vision is rightly directed, may be lost in the sky, if you look away for a moment, as hard to hit as a star with a telescope.

It is a sort of encouraging or soothing sound, to assuage their painful fears when they go over a town, as a man moans to deaden a physical pain. The direction of their flight each spring and autumn reminds us inlanders how the coast trends. In the afternoon I met Flood, who endeavored to draw my attention to a flock of geese in the mizzling air, but encountering me he lost sight of them, while I at length, looking that way, discovered them, though he could not. This was the third flock to-day. Now, if ever, then, we may expect some change in the weather.

P. M. To the swamp in front of the C. Miles house. I have no doubt that a good farmer, who of course loves his work, takes exactly the same kind of pleasure in draining a swamp, seeing the water flow out in his newly-cut ditch, that a child does in his mud dykes and water wheels. Both alike love to play with the natural forces.

There is quite a ravine by which the water of this swamp flows out eastward, and at the bottom of it many prinos berries are conspicuous, now apparently in their prime. These are appointed to be an ornament of this bare season between leaves and snow. The swamp pink's large, yellowish buds, too, are conspicuous now. I see also the swamp pyrus buds, expanded sometimes into small leaves. This then is a regular phenomenon. It is the only shrub or tree that I know which so decidedly springs again in the fall, in the Indian summer. It might be called the Indian-summer shrub. The clethra buds, too, have decidedly expanded there, showing leaflets, but very small. Some of the new pyrus leaves are nearly full-grown. Would not this be a pretty device on some hale and cheery old man's shield, the swamp pyrus unfolding its leaves again in the fall? Every plant enjoys some preëminence, and this is its: the most forward to respond to the warmer season. How much spring there is in it! Its sap is most easily liquefied. It takes the least sun to thaw and develop it. It makes this annual sacrifice of its very first leaves to its love for the sun. While all other plants are reserved, this is open and confiding. I see it not without emotion. I, too, have my spring thoughts even in November. This I see in pleasant November days, when

rills and birds begin to tinkle in winter fashion through the more open aisles of the swamps.

I do not know exactly what that sweet word is which the chickadee says when it hops near to me now in those ravines.

When the air is thick and the sky overcast, we need not walk so far. We give our attention to nearer objects, being less distracted from them. I take occasion to explore some near wood which my walks commonly overshoot.

Ah, my friends, I know you better than you think, and love you better, too. The day after never, we will have an explanation.

Nov. 8, 1858. P. M. To Boulder Field. . . . Nature has many scenes to exhibit, and constantly draws a curtain over this part or that. She is constantly repainting the landscape and all surfaces, dressing up some scene for our entertainment. Lately we had a leafy wilderness; now bare twigs begin to prevail, and soon she will surprise us with a mantle of snow. Some green she thinks so good for our eyes that, like blue, she never banishes it entirely from our eyes, but has created evergreens.

It is remarkable how little any but a lichenist will observe on the bark of trees. The mass of men have but the vaguest and most indefinite notion of mosses, as a sort of shreds and fringes, and the world in which the lichenist dwells is

much further from theirs than one side of this earth from the other. They see bark as if they saw it not. . . . Each phase of nature, while not invisible, is yet not too distinct and obstrusive. It is there, to be found when we look for it, but not demanding our attention. It is like a silent but sympathizing companion, in whose company we retain most of the advantages of solitude, with whom we can walk and talk, or be silent, naturally, without the necessity of talking in a strain foreign to the place. I know of but one or two persons with whom I can afford to walk. With most, the walk degenerates into a more vigorous use of your legs (ludicrously purposeless), while you are discussing some weighty argument, each one having his say, spoiling each other's day, worrying one another with conversation. I know of no use in the walking part in this case, except that we may *seem* to be getting on together toward some goal. But of course we keep our distance all the way. Jumping every wall and ditch with vigor in the vain hope of shaking your companion off, trying to kill two birds with one stone, though they sit at opposite points of the compass, to see nature and do the honors to one who does not.

I wandered over bare fields where the cattle, lately turned out, roamed restless and unsatisfied with the feed. I dived into a rust-

ling young oak wood where not a green leaf was to be seen, and again I thought, They are all gone surely, and have left me alone. Not even a man Friday remains. What nutriment can I extract from these bare twigs? Starvation stares me in the face. "*Nay, nay,*" said a nuthatch, making its way, head downward, about a bare hickory close by, "The nearer the bone, the sweeter the meat. Only the superfluous has been swept away. Now we behold the naked truth. If at any time the weather is too bleak and cold for you, keep the sunny side of the trunk, for a wholesome and inspiring warmth is there, such as the summer never afforded. There are the winter mornings with the sun on the oak wood tops. While buds sleep thoughts wake." "Hear! hear!" screamed the jay from a neighboring tree, where I had heard a tittering for some time, "winter has a concentrated and nutty kernel, if you know where to look for it," and then the speaker shifted to another tree farther off and reiterated his assertions, and his mate at a distance confirmed them; and now I heard a suppressed chuckle from a red squirrel that heard the last remark, but had kept silent and invisible all the while. The birds being gone, the squirrel came running down a slanting bough, and as he stopped twirling a nut, called out rather impudently, "Look

here! just get a snug-fitting fur coat and a pair of fur gloves like mine, and you may laugh at a northeast storm." Then he wound up with a stray phrase in his own lingo, accompanied by a flourish of his tail.

Nov. 9, 1850. I found many fresh violets (*Viola pedata*) to-day in the woods.

Nov. 9, 1851. I would fain set down something beside facts. Facts should only be the frame to my picture. They should be material to the mythology which I am writing, not facts to assist men to make money, farmers to farm profitably in any common sense, facts to tell who I am, and where I have been, or what I have thought; as now the bell rings for evening meeting, and its volumes of sound, like smoke which rises from where a cannon is fired, make the tent in which I dwell. My facts shall all be falsehoods to the common sense. I would so state facts that they shall be significant, shall be myths or mythologic, facts which the mind perceived, thoughts which the body thought, with these I deal. I cherish vague and misty forms, vaguest when the cloud at which I gaze is dissipated quite, and naught but the skyey depths are seen.

James P. Brown's retired pond, now shallow and more than half dried up, seems far away and rarely visited, known to few, though not

far off. It is encircled by an amphitheatre of low hills, on two opposite sides covered with high pine woods, the two other sides with young white oaks and white pines respectively. I am affected by seeing there reflected this gray day, the gray stems of the pine wood on the hillside, and the sky; that mirror, as it were a permanent picture to be seen there, a permanent piece of idealism. I am a little surprised on beholding this reflection which I did not perceive for some minutes after looking into the pond, as if I had not regarded this as a constant phenomenon. What has become of Nature's common-sense and love of facts when in the very mud-puddles she reflects the skies and the trees? Does that procedure recommend itself entirely to the common-sense of men? Is that the way the New England farmer would have arranged it?

Now the leaves are gone, the birds' nests are revealed, the brood being fledged and flown. There is a perfect adaptation in the material used in constructing a nest. Here is one which I took from a maple on the causeway at Hubbard's bridge. It is fastened to the twigs by white woolen strings (out of a shawl?) which were picked up in the road, though it is more than half a mile from a house; and the sharp eyes of the bird have discovered plenty of horse-hairs out of the tail or mane with which to give

it form by their spring, with meadow hay for body, and the reddish woolly material which invests the ferns in the spring, apparently, for lining.

Nov. 9, 1852. *Ranunculus repens*, *Bidens connata*, flat in a brook, yarrow, dandelion, autumnal dandelion, tansy, *Aster undulatus*, etc. A late three-ribbed golden-rod, with large serratures in the middle of the narrow leaves, ten or twelve rays, *Potentilla argentea*. Early part of November, time for walnutting.

Nov. 9, 1853. P. M. To Fair Haven Hill by boat with W. E. C. The muskrats have added a new story to their houses since the last flood which covered them, I mean that of October 31st, or thereabouts. They are uncommonly high, I think full four feet by five or more in diameter, a heaping cart-load. There are at least eight such within half a mile. It is remarkable how little effect the waves have on them, while a heap of manure or a haycock would be washed away or undermined at once. I opened one. It was composed of coarse grass, pontederia stems, etc., not altogether in mouthfuls. This was three and a half feet above water, others quite four. After taking off a foot, I came to the chamber. It was a regularly formed oval or elliptical chamber, about eighteen inches the longest way, and seven or

eight inches deep, shaped like a pebble, with smooth walls of the weeds, and bottomed or bedded with a very little drier grass, a mere coating of it. It would hold four or five, closely packed. The entrance, eight or nine inches wide, led directly from the water at an angle of 45°, and in the water there were some green and white stub ends of pontederia (?) stems, I think, looking like flagroot. That thick wall, a foot quite or more above, and eighteen inches or two feet [below?], being of these damp materials soon freezes, and makes a tight and warm house. The walls are of such breadth at the bottom that the water in the gallery probably never freezes. If the height of these houses is any sign of high or low water, this winter it will be uncommonly high.

Nov. 9, 1855. 9 A. M. With Blake up Assabet. Saw in the pool at the Hemlocks what I at first thought was a brighter leaf moved by the zephyr on the surface of the smooth, dark water, but it was a splendid male summer duck, which allowed us to approach within seven or eight rods. It was sailing up close to the shore, and then rose and flew up the curving stream. It was a perfect floating gem, and Blake, who had never seen the like, was greatly surprised, not knowing that so splendid a bird was found in this part of the world. There it

was, constantly moving back and forth by invisible means, and wheeling on the smooth surface, showing now its breast, now its side, now its rear. It had a large, rich, flowing, green, burnished crest, a most ample head-dress, two crescents of dazzling white on the side of the head and the black neck, a pinkish red bill (with black tip) and similar irides, and a long white mark under and at wing-point on sides, the side, as if the form of wing at this distance, light bronze or greenish brown; but, above all, its breast, when it turns into the right light, all aglow with splendid purple (?) or ruby (?) reflections like the throat of the humming-bird. It might not appear so, close at hand. This was the most surprising to me. What an ornament to a river, that glowing gem floating in contact with its waters; as if the humming-bird should recline its ruby throat and its breast there; like dipping a glowing coal in water. It so affected me. Unless you are thus near, and have a glass, the splendor and beauty of its colors will not be discovered.

I deal so much with my fuel, what with finding it, loading it, conveying it home, sawing and splitting it, get so many values out of it, that the heat it will yield when in the stove is of a lower temperature and less value in my eyes, though when I feel it I am reminded of all my

adventures. I just turned to put in a stick. I had my choice in the box of gray chestnut rail, black and brown snag of an oak stump, dead white pine top, or else old bridge plank, and chose the last. Yes, I lose sight of the ultimate uses of the wood and work, the immediate ones are so great, and yet most of mankind, those called most successful in obtaining the necessaries of life, getting a living, obtain none of this except a mere vulgar and perhaps stupefying warmth. I feel disposed, to this extent, to do the getting a living and the living for any three or four of my neighbors who really want the fuel and will appreciate the act, now that I have supplied myself. I affect what would commonly be called a mean and miserable way of living. I thoroughly sympathize with all savages and gypsies in as far as they assert the original right of man to the productions of Nature and a place in her.

Nov. 9, 1857. Mr. [Jacob] Farmer tells me that one Sunday he went to his barn, having nothing to do, and thought he would watch the swallows, republican swallows. The old bird was feeding her young, and he sat within fifteen feet, overlooking them. There were five young, and as often as the bird came with a fly, the one at the door or opening took it, and then they all hitched round one notch, so that a new one was

presented at the door, who received the next fly, and this was the invariable order, the same one never receiving two flies in succession. At last the old bird brought a very small fly, and the young one that swallowed it did not desert his ground, but waited to receive the next, but when the bird came with another of the usual size, she commenced a loud and long scolding at the little one, till it resigned its place, and the next in succession received the fly.

Nov. 9, 1858. The newspaper tells me that Uncannunuc was white with snow for a short time on the morning of the 7th. Thus steadily but unobserved the winter steals down from the north till from our highest hills we can discern its vanguard. Next week perchance our own hills will be white. Little did we think how near the winter was. It is as if a scout had brought us word that an enemy was approaching in force, only a day's march distant. Manchester was the spy this time, who has a camp at the base of that hill. We had not thought seriously of winter, we dwelt in fancied security yet.

It is of no use to plow deeper than the soil is, unless you mean to follow up that mode of cultivation persistently, manuring highly and carting in muck, at each plowing making a soil, in short. Yet many a man likes to tackle weighty themes like immortality, but in his discourse he turns

up nothing but yellow sand, under which what little fertile and available surface soil he may have is quite buried and lost. He should teach frugality rather, how to postpone the fatal hour; should plant a crop of beans. He might have raised enough of them to make a deacon of him, though never a preacher. Many a man runs his plow so deep in heavy or strong soil that it sticks fast in the furrow. It is a great art in the writer to improve from day to day just that soil and fertility which he has, to harvest that crop which his life yields, whatever it may be, not be straining as if to reach apples and oranges when he yields only ground-nuts. He should be digging, not soaring. Just as earnest as your life is, so deep is your soil. If strong and deep, you will sow wheat and raise bread of life in it.

Nov. 10, 1851. It appears to me that those things which most engage the daily attention of men, as politics, for instance, are, it is true, vital functions of human society, but should be unconsciously performed like the vital functions of the natural body. It is as if a thinker submitted himself to be rasped by the great gizzard of creation. Politics is, as it were, the gizzard of society, full of grit and gravel, and the two political parties are its two opposite halves which grind on each other. Not only individuals, but

states, have thus a confirmed dyspepsia, which expresses itself, you can imagine by what sort of eloquence. Our life is not altogether a forgetting, but also, to a great extent, a remembering of that which, perchance, we should never have been conscious of, which should not be permitted to distract a man's waking hours. Why should we not meet, not always as dyspeptics, but sometimes as eupeptics? In our intercourse we refer to no true and absolute account of things, but there is ever a petty reference to man, to society, aye, often to Christianity. I come from the funeral of mankind to attend to a natural phenomenon. The significance of any fact in nature, of sun and moon and stars, is so much grander when not referred to man and his needs, but viewed absolutely. Then we catch sounds which are wafted from over the confines of time.

Nov. 10, 1858. Hearing in an oak wood near by a sound as if some one had broken a twig, I looked up and saw a jay, pecking at an acorn. There were several of them gathering acorns on a scarlet oak. I could hear them breaking them off. They then flew to a suitable limb, and placing the acorn under one foot, hammered away at it busily, looking round from time to time to see if any foe was approaching, and soon reached the meat, and nib-

bled at it, holding up their heads to swallow, while they held it very firmly with their claws. (Their hammering made a sound like the woodpecker's.) Nevertheless, it sometimes dropped to the ground before they had done with it.

Nov. 11, 1850. This afternoon I heard a single cricket singing, chirruping on a bank, the only one I have heard for a long time, like a squirrel, or a little bird, clear and shrill, — as I fancied, like an evening robin, singing in this evening of the year. A very fine and poetical strain for such a little singer. I had never before heard the cricket so like a bird. It is a remarkable note, the earth-song.

That delicate, waving, feathery dry grass which I saw yesterday is to be remembered with the autumn. The dry grasses are not dead for me. A beautiful form has as much life at one season as at another.

I notice that everywhere in the pastures minute young fragrant life-everlasting with only four or five flat-lying leaves and thread-like roots, all together as big as a fourpence, spots the ground, like winter rye and grass which roots itself in the fall against another year. These little things have bespoken their places for the next season. They have a little pellet of cotton or down in their centres, ready for an early start in the spring.

I saw an old bone in the woods covered with lichens, which looked like the bone of an old settler, which yet some little animal had recently gnawed. I saw plainly the marks of its teeth, so indefatigable is nature to strip the flesh from bones, and return them to dust again. No little rambling beast can go by some dry and ancient bone, but he must turn aside and try his teeth upon it. An old bone is knocked about till it becomes dust; nature has no mercy on it. It was quite too ancient to suggest disagreeable associations. It survives like the memory of a man. With time all that was personal and offensive wears off. The tooth of envy may sometimes gnaw it and reduce it more rapidly, but it is much more a prey to forgetfulness.

Nov. 11, 1851. 2 P. M. A bright, but cold day, finger-cold. One must next wear gloves, put his hands in winter quarters. There is a cold, silvery light on the white pines as I go through J. P. Brown's field near Jenny Dugan's. I am glad of the shelter of the thick pine wood on the Marlboro' road, on the plain. The roar of the wind over the pines sounds like the surf on countless beaches, an endless shore, and at intervals it sounds like a gong resounding through halls and entries, that is, there is a certain resounding woodiness in the tone. The sky looks mild and fair enough from this shelter.

Every withered blade of grass and every dry weed as well as pine needle, reflects the light. The lately dark woods are open and light, the sun shines in upon the stems of trees which it has not shone on since spring. Around the edges of ponds the weeds are dead, and there, too, the light penetrates. The atmosphere is less moist and gross, and light is universally dispersed. We are greatly indebted to these transition seasons or states of the atmosphere, which show us thus phenomena that belong not to the summer or the winter of any climate. The brilliancy of the autumn is wonderful, this flashing brilliancy, as if the atmosphere were phosphoric.

When I have been confined to my chamber for the greater part of several days by some employment or perchance by the ague, till I felt weary and house-worn, I have been conscious of a certain softness to which I am otherwise commonly a stranger, in which the gates were loosened to some emotions; and if I were to become a confirmed invalid, I see how some sympathy with mankind and society might spring up. Yet what is my softness good for, even to tears? It is not I, but nature in me. I laughed at myself the other day to think that I cried while reading a pathetic story. I was no more affected in spirit than I frequently am, methinks. The

tears were merely a phenomenon of the bowels, and I felt that that expression of my sympathy, so unusual with me, was something mean, and such as I should be ashamed to have the subject of it understand.

To-day you may write a chapter on the advantages of traveling, and to-morrow you may write another on the advantages of not traveling. The horizon has one kind of beauty and attraction to him who has never explored the hills and mountains in it, and another, I fear a less ethereal and glorious one, to him who has. That blue mountain in the horizon is certainly the most heavenly, the most elysian, which we have not climbed, on which we have not camped for a night. But our horizon, by such exploration, is only moved farther off, and if our whole life should prove thus a failure, the future which is to atone for all, where still there must be some success, will be more glorious still.

It is fatal to the writer to be too much possessed by his thought; things must be a little remote to be described.

Nov. 11, 1853. 9 A. M. To Fair Haven by boat. The morning is so calm and pleasant, that I must spend the forenoon abroad. The river is smooth as polished silver. Some musk-rat houses have received a slight addition in the night. The one I opened day before yesterday

has been covered again, though not yet raised so high as before. I counted nineteen between Hubbard bathing place and Hubbard's further wood, this side the Hollowell place, from two to four feet high. I opened one. The floor of the chamber was two feet or more beneath the top, and one foot above the water. It was quite warm from the recent presence of the inhabitants.

Nov. 11, 1854. Minott heard geese go over night before last about 8 P. M. Therien, too, heard them "yelling like anything" over Walden, where he is cutting, the same evening.

Nov. 11, 1855. P. M. Up Assabet. The bricks of which the muskrat builds his house are little masses or wads of the dead weedy rubbish on the muddy bottom which it probably takes up with its mouth. It consists of various kinds of weeds now agglutinated by the slime, and dried conferval threads, utricularia, hornwort, etc., — a streaming, tuft-like wad. The building of these cabins appears to be coincident with the commencement of their clam diet, for now their vegetable food, excepting roots, is cut off. I see many small collections of shells already left along the river's brink. Thither they resort with their clam, to open and eat it. But if it is the edge of a meadow which is being overflowed, they must raise it, and make a permanent dry stool there, for they cannot

afford to swim far with each clam. I see where one has left half a peck of shells on perhaps the foundation of an old stool or a harder clod which the water is just about to cover. He has begun his stool by laying two or three fresh wads upon the shells, the foundation of his house. Thus their cabin is apparently first intended merely for a stool, and afterward, when it is large, perforated as if it were the bank! There is no cabin for a long way above the hemlocks, where there is no low meadow bordering the stream.

Nov. 11, 1858. Goodwin brings me this morning a this year's loon which he has just killed in the river, the Great Northern Diver, but a smaller specimen than Wilson describes, and somewhat differently marked. It is twenty-seven inches long to end of feet, by forty-four, bill three and three fourths to angle of mouth. Above, blackish gray, with small white spots (two at end of each feather). Beneath, pure white, throat and all, except a dusky bar across the vent. Bill, chiefly pale bluish and dusky. You are struck by its broad, flat, sharp-edged legs, made to cut through the water rather than to walk with, set far back and naturally stretched out backward, its long and powerful bill, conspicuous white throat and breast. Dislodged by winter in the north, it is slowly traveling toward

a warmer climate, diving this morning in the cool river, which is now full of light, the trees and shrubs on its bank having long since lost their leaves. The neighboring fields are white with frost. Yet this hardy bird is comfortable and contented there, if the sportsmen will let it alone.

Nov. 11, 1859. October 24, riding home from Acton, I saw the withered leaves blown from an oak by the roadside, dashing off, gyrating, and surging upward into the air, so exactly like a flock of birds sporting with one another, that for a moment, at least, I could not be sure they were not birds, and it suggested how far the motions of birds, like those of these leaves, might be determined by currents of air, that is, how far the bird learns to conform to such currents.

Nov. 12, 1837. I yet lack discernment to distinguish the whole lesson of to-day, but it is not lost, it will come to me at last. My desire is to know *what* I have lived, that I may know *how* to live henceforth.

Nov. 12 [?], 1841. Music is only a sweet striving to express character. Now that lately I have heard of some traits in the character of a fair and earnest maiden whom I had known only superficially, but who has gone hence to make herself more known by distance, these

strains sound like a wild harp music. There is apology enough for all the deficiency and shortcoming in the world in the patient waiting of any bud of character to unfold itself.

Only character can command our reverent love. It is all mysteries in itself.

> What is it gilds the trees and clouds,
> And paints the heavens so gay,
> But yonder fast-abiding light
> With its unchanging ray?
>
> I 've felt within my inmost soul
> Such cheerful morning news,
> In the horizon of my mind
> I 've seen such morning hues,
>
> As in the twilight of the dawn
> When the first birds awake,
> Is heard within some silent wood
> When they the small twigs break;
>
> Or in the eastern skies is seen
> Before the sun appears,
> Foretelling of the summer heats
> Which far away he bears.

Walden. P. M. I seem to discern the very form of the wind when, blowing over the hills, it falls in broad flakes upon the surface of the pond, this subtle element obeying the law of the least subtle. I cannot but be encouraged by the blithe activity of the elements. Who hears the rippling of the rivers will not utterly despair of anything. The wind in the wood yonder

sounds like an incessant waterfall, the water dashing and roaring among the rocks.

Nov. 12, 1851. Write often, write upon a thousand themes, rather than long at a time, not trying to turn too many feeble summersets in the air, and so come down upon your head at last. Antæus-like, be not long absent from the ground. Those sentences are good and well-discharged which are like so many little resiliences from the spring-floor of our life, each a distinct fruit and kernel springing from terra firma. Let there be as many distinct plants as the soil and the light can maintain. Take as many bounds in a day as possible, sentences uttered with your back to the wall. Those are the admirable bounds when the performer has lately touched the spring-board. A good bound into the air from the air is a good and wholesome experience, but what shall we say to a man's leaping off precipices in the attempt to fly? He comes down like lead. But let your feet be planted upon the rock, with the rock also at your back, and as in the case of King James and Roderick Dhu, you can say, —

> "Come one, come all, this rock shall fly
> From its firm base, as soon as I."

Such, uttered or not, is the strength of your sentences, sentences in which there is no strain, no fluttering inconstant and quasi aspiration,

and ever memorable Icarian fall wherein your helpless wings are expanded merely by your swift descent into the pelagos beneath.

—— is one who will not stoop to rise. He wants something for which he will not pay the going price. He will only learn slowly by failure, not a noble, but disgraceful failure. This is not a noble method of learning, to be educated by evitable suffering, like De Quincey, for instance. Better dive like a muskrat into the mud, and pile up a few weeds to sit on during the floods, a foundation of your own laying, a house of your own building, however cold and cheerless. Methinks the hawk that soars so loftily, and circles so steadily and apparently without effort, has earned this power by faithfully creeping on the ground as a reptile in a former state of existence. You must creep before you can run, you must run before you can fly. Better one effective bound upward with elastic limbs from the valley, than a jumping from the mountain-tops with attempt to fly. The observatories are not built high, but deep. The foundation is equal to the superstructure. It is more important to a distinct vision that it be steady, than that it be from an elevated point of view.

Walking through Ebby Hubbard's wood this afternoon with Minott, who was actually taking

a walk for amusement and exercise, he said, on seeing some white pines blown down, that you might know that ground had been cultivated, for otherwise they would have rooted themselves more strongly. . . . He has a story for every woodland path. He has hunted in them all. Where we walked last, he had once caught a partridge by the wing.

7 P. M. To Conantum. A still cold night. The light of the rising moon in the east. The ground is frozen and echoes to my tread. There are absolutely no crickets to be heard now. They are heard, then, till the ground freezes. I hear no sound of any bird now at night, but sometimes some creature stirring, a rabbit, or skunk, or fox, betrayed by the dry leaves which lie so thick and light. The openness of the leafless woods is particularly apparent now by moonlight; they are nearly as light as the open field. It is worth the while always to go to the water, when there is but little light in the heavens, and see the heavens and the stars reflected. There is double the light that there is elsewhere, and the reflection has the force of a great silent companion. I thought to-night that I saw glow-worms in the grass on the side of the hill, was almost certain of it, and tried to lay my hands on them, but found it was the moonlight reflected from (apparently) the fine

frost crystals on the withered grass. They were so fine that the reflections went and came like glow-worms. The gleams were just long enough for glow-worms, and the effect was precisely the same.

Nov. 12, 1852. 4 P. M. To Cliffs. It clears up. A very bright rainbow, three reds, two greens. I see its foot within half a mile in the southeast, heightening the green of the pines. From Fair Haven Hill, I see a very distant, long, low, dark-blue cloud still left in the northwest horizon, beyond the mountains, and against this I see, apparently, a narrow white cloud resting on every mountain, and conforming exactly to its outline, as if the white, frilled edge of the main cloud were turned up over them. In fact, the massive dark-blue cloud beyond revealed these distinct white caps resting on the mountains this side, for twenty miles along the horizon.

The sun having set, my long, dark-blue cloud has assumed the form of an alligator, and where the sun has just disappeared it is split into two tremendous jaws, between which glows the eternal city, its crenate lips all coppery-golden, its serrate fiery teeth. Its body lies a slumbering mass along the horizon.

Nov. 12, 1853. I cannot but regard it as a kindness in those who have the steering of me, that by the want of pecuniary wealth, I have

been nailed down to this my native region so long and steadily, and made to study and love this spot of earth more and more. What would signify in comparison a thin and diffused love and knowledge of the whole earth instead, got by wandering? Wealth will not buy a man a home in nature. The man of business does not by his business earn a residence in nature. It is an insignificant, a merely negative good to be provided with thick garments against cold and wet, an unprofitable and weak condition compared with being able to extract some exhilaration, some warmth even, out of cold and wet themselves, and to clothe them with our sympathy. The rich man buys woolens and furs, and sits naked and shivering still, in spirit, but the poor lord of creation makes cold and wet to warm him, and be his garments.

The hylodes, as it is the first frog heard in the spring, so it is the last in the autumn. I heard it last, I think, about a month ago. I do not remember any hum of insects for a long time, though I heard a cricket to-day.

Nov. 12, 1858. It is much the coldest day yet, and the ground is a little frozen and resounds under my tread. All people move the brisker for the cold, are braced and a little elated by it. They love to say, "Cold day, sir." Though the days are shorter, you get more work

out of a hired man than before, for he must work to keep warm. . . . We are now reduced to browsing on buds and twigs, and methinks with this diet and this cold, we shall appear to the stall-fed thinkers like those unkempt cattle in meadows now, grazing the withered grass.

I think the change to some higher color in a leaf is an evidence that it has arrived at a late, more perfect, and final maturity, answering to the maturity of fruits, and not to that of green leaves, etc., which merely serve a purpose. The word ripe is thought by some to be derived from the verb to reap, so that what is ripe is ready to be reaped. The fall of the leaf is preceded by a ripe old age.

Nov. 12, 1859. The first sprinkling of snow, which for a short time whitens the ground in spots.

I do not know how to distinguish between our waking life and a dream. Are we not always living the life that we imagine we are? Fear creates danger, and courage dispels it.

There was a remarkable sunset, I think the twenty-fifth of October. The sunset sky reached quite from west to east, and it was the most varied in its forms and colors that I remember to have seen. At one time the clouds were softly and delicately rippled like the ripple marks on sand. But it was hard for me to see

its beauty then, when my mind was filled with Captain Brown. So great a wrong as his fate implied overshadowed all beauty in the world.

Nov. 13, 1837. Sin destroys the perception of the beautiful. It is a sure evidence of the health and innocence of the beholder, if the senses are alive to the beauty of nature. This shall be the test of innocence, if I can hear a taunt, and look out on this friendly moon pacing the heavens in queen-like majesty, with the accustomed yearning.

Truth is ever returning into herself. I glimpse one feature to-day, another to-morrow, and the next day they are blended.

Nov. 13, 1839. Make the most of your regrets. Never smother your sorrow, but tend and cherish it, till it come to have a separate and integral interest. To regret deeply is to live afresh. By so doing you will find yourself restored to all your emoluments.

Nov. 13 [?], 1841. We constantly anticipate repose. Yet it surely can only be the repose that is in entire and healthy activity. It must be a repose without rust. What is leisure but opportunity for more complete and entire action? Our energies pine for exercise. The time we spend in the discharge of our duties is so much leisure, so that there is no man but has sufficient of it.

This ancient Scotch poetry at which its contemporaries so marveled, sounds like the uncertain lisping of a child. When man's speech flows freest, it but stammers. There is never a free and clear deliverance; but, read now when the illusion of smooth verse is destroyed by the antique spelling, the sense is seen to stammer and stumble all the plainer. To how few thoughts do all these sincere efforts give utterance! An hour's conversation with these men would have done more. I am astonished to see how meagre that diet is which has fed so many men. The music of sound, which is all-sufficient at first, is speedily lost, and then the fame of the poet must rest on the music of the sense. A great philosophical and moral poet would give permanence to the language by making the best sound convey the best sense.

Nov. 13, 1851. To Fair Haven Hill. A cold and dark afternoon, the sun being behind clouds in the west. The landscape is barren of objects, the trees being leafless, and so little light in the sky for variety; such a day as will almost oblige a man to eat his own heart, a day in which you must hold on to life by your teeth. Now is the time to cut timber for yokes and ox-bows, leaving the tough bark on, yokes for your own neck, finding yourself yoked to matter and to time. Truly hard times, these! Not a mosquito left,

not an insect to hum. Crickets gone into winter quarters. Friends long since gone there, and you left to walk on frozen ground with your hands in your pockets. Ah, but is not this a glorious time for your deep inward fires? Will not your green hickory and white oak burn clear in this frosty air? Now is not your manhood taxed by the great Assessor? taxed for having a soul, a rateable soul? A day when you cannot pluck a flower, cannot dig a parsnip, nor pull a turnip, for the frozen ground. What do the thoughts find to live on? What avails you now the fire you stole from heaven? Does not each thought become a vulture to gnaw your vitals? No Indian summer have we had this November. I see but few traces of the perennial spring. We have not even the cold beauty of ice crystals and snowy architecture. Nothing but the echo of your steps on the frozen ground, which, it is true, is being prepared for immeasurable snows. Still there are brave thoughts within you that shall remain to rustle the winter through, like white-oak leaves upon your boughs, or like shrub oaks that remind the traveler of a fire upon the hillsides, or evergreen thoughts, cold even in midsummer, by their nature. These shall contrast the more fairly with the snow. Some warm springs shall still tinkle and fume, and send their column of vapor to the skies.

The mountains are of an uncommonly dark blue to-day. Perhaps this is owing not only to the great clearness of the atmosphere, which makes them seem nearer, but to the absence of the leaves. A little mistiness occasioned by warmth would set them further off. I see snow on the Peterboro' Hills reflecting the sun. It is pleasant thus to look from afar into winter. We look at a condition which we have not reached. Notwithstanding the poverty of the immediate landscape, in the horizon it is simplicity and grandeur. I look into valleys white with snow and now lit up by the sun, while all this country is in shade. There is a great gap in the mountain range just south of the two Peterboro' Hills. Methinks I have been through it, and that a road runs there. Humble as these mountains are compared with some, at this distance I am convinced they answer the purpose of Andes. Seen at this distance, I know of nothing more grand and stupendous than that great mountain gate or pass, a great cleft or sinus in the blue banks, as in a dark evening cloud, fit portal to lead from one country, from one quarter of the world to another, where the children of Israel might file through. Little does the New Hampshire farmer who drives over that road realize through what a sublime gap he is passing. You would almost as soon think of a road as winding

through and over a dark evening cloud. This prospect of the mountains from our low hills is what I would rather have than pastures on the mountain-side such as my neighbors have, aye, than townships at their base. Instead of driving my cattle up there in May, I simply turn my eyes thither. They pasture there, and the grass they feed on never withers.

Just spent a couple of hours (8 to 10) with Miss Mary Emerson at Holbrook's; the wittiest and most vivacious woman I know, certainly that woman among my acquaintance whom it is most profitable to meet, the least frivolous, who will most surely provoke to good conversation. She is singular among women, at least, in being really and perseveringly interested to know what thoughtful people think. She relates herself surely to the intellectual wherever she goes. It is perhaps her greatest praise and peculiarity that she more surely than any other woman gives her companion occasion to utter his best thought. In spite of her own biases, she can entertain a large thought with hospitality, and is not prevented by any intellectuality in it, as women commonly are. In short, she is a genius, as woman seldom is, reminding you less often of her sex than any woman whom I know. Thus she is capable of a masculine appreciation of poetry and philosophy. I never talked with

any other woman who I thought accompanied me so far in describing a poetic experience. Miss Fuller is the only other I think of in this connection, and of her rather from her fame than from my knowledge of her. Miss Emerson expressed to-night a singular want of respect for her own sex, saying that they were frivolous, almost without exception, that woman was the weaker vessel, etc.; and that into whatever family she might go, she depended more upon the clown for society than upon the lady of the house. Men are more likely to have opinions of their own.

Just in proportion to the outward poverty is the inward wealth. In cold weather fire burns with a clearer flame.

Nov. 13, 1855. In mid-forenoon, 10.45, seventy or eighty geese, in three harrows, successively smaller, flying southwest, pretty well west, over the house. A completely overcast, occasionally drizzling forenoon. I at once heard their clangor, and rushed to and opened the window. The three harrows were gradually formed into one great one, before they were out of sight, the geese shifting their places without slacking their progress.

P. M. To Cardinal Shore. I saw in the pond by the roadside, a few rods before me, the sun shining bright, a mink swimming, the whole

length of his back out. It was a rich brown fur, glowing internally as the sun fell on it, like some ladies' boas; not black, as it sometimes appears, especially on ice. It landed within three rods, showing its long, somewhat cat-like neck, and I observed, was carrying something by its mouth, dragging it overland. At first I thought it a fish, maybe an eel, and when it had got half a dozen feet, I ran forward, and it dropped its prey, and went into the wall. It was a muskrat, the head and part of the legs torn off and gone, but the rest still fresh and quite heavy, including hind legs and tail. It had probably killed the muskrat in the brook, eaten so much, and was dragging the remainder to its retreat in the wall.

Nov. 13, 1858. It is wonderful what gradation and harmony there is in nature. The light reflected from bare twigs at this season, that is, since they began to be bare, in the latter part of October, is not unlike that from gossamer, and like that which will erelong be reflected from the ice that will incrust them. So the bleached herbage of the fields is like frost, and frost like snow, and one prepares for the other.

Nov. 14 [?], 1841. To find the sunset described by the old Scotch poet, Douglas, as I have seen it, repays me for many weary pages of antiquated Scotch. Nothing so restores and harmonizes antiquity and makes it blithe, as the

discovery of some natural sympathy. Why is it that there is something melancholy in antiquity? We forget that it had any other future than our present, as if it were not as near to *the* future as ourselves. No, these ranks of men to right and left, posterity and ancestry, are not to be thridded by any earnest mortal. The heavens stood over the heads of our ancestors as near as to us. Any living word in their books abolishes the difference of time. It need only be considered from the present standpoint.

Nov. 14, 1851. In the evening I went to a party. It is a bad place to go to, thirty or forty persons, mostly young women, in a small room, warm and noisy. Was introduced to two young women. The first was as lively and loquacious as a chickadee, had been accustomed to the society of watering places, and therefore could get no refreshment out of such a dry fellow as I. The other was said to be pretty looking, but I rarely look people in their faces, and, moreover, I could not hear what she said, there was such a clacking; could only see the motion of her lips when I looked that way. I could imagine better places for conversation, where there should be a certain degree of silence surrounding you, and less than forty talking at once. Why, this afternoon even I did better. Old Mr. Joseph Hosmer and I ate luncheon of cracker and

cheese together in the woods. I heard all he said, though it was not much, to be sure, and he could hear me; and then he talked out of such a glorious repose, taking a leisurely bite at the cracker and cheese between his words, and so some of him was communicated to me, and some of me to him, I trust.

These parties, I think, are a part of the machinery of modern society that young people may be brought together to form marriage connections.

What is the use in going to see people whom yet you never see, and who never see you?

I met a man yesterday afternoon in the road who behaved as if he were deaf, and I talked with him in the cold in a loud tone for fifteen minutes, but that uncertainty about his ears, and the necessity I felt to talk loudly, took off the fine edge of what I had to say, and prevented my saying anything satisfactory. It is bad enough when your neighbor does not understand you, but if there is any uncertainty as to whether he hears you, so that you are obliged to become your own auditor, you are so much the poorer speaker, and so there is a double failure.

Nov. 14, 1852. Still, yarrow, tall buttercup and tansy.

Nov. 14, 1855. Heard to-day in my chamber about 11 A. M. a singular sharp, crackling

sound by the window, which made me think of an insect's snapping with its wings or striking something. It was produced by one of three small pitch-pine cones which I gathered November 7th, and which lay in the sun on the window-sill. I noticed a slight motion in the scales at the apex, when suddenly, with a louder crackling, it burst, or the scales separated with a crackling sound on all sides of it. It was a sudden and general bursting or expanding of all the scales with a sharp, crackling sound, and motion of the whole cone as by a force pent up within it. I suppose the strain only needed to be relieved at one point for the whole to go off.

Nov. 14, 1857. The principal flight of geese was November 8th, so that the bulk of them preceded this cold turn five days. I find my hands stiffened and involuntarily finding their way to my pockets. No wonder that the weather is a standing subject of conversation, since we are so sensitive. If we had not gone through several winters, we might well be alarmed at the approach of cold weather. With this keener blast my hands suddenly fail to fulfill their office, as it were, begin to die. We must put on armor against the new foe. I can hardly tie and untie my shoestrings. What a story to tell an inhabitant of the tropics, perchance, that you went to walk after many months of warmth, when

suddenly the air became so cold and hostile to your nature that it benumbed you, so that you lost the use of some of your limbs, could not untie your shoestrings!

Nov. 14, 1858. Now while the frosty air begins to nip your fingers and your nose, the frozen ground rapidly wears away the soles of your shoes, as sandpaper might. The old she-wolf is nibbling at your very extremities. The frozen ground eating away the soles of your shoes is only typical of the vulture that gnaws your heart this month. Now all that moves migrates or has migrated, ducks are gone by, the citizen has sought the town.

Probably the witch hazel and many other flowers lingered till the eleventh, when it was colder. The last leaves and flowers (?) may be said to fall about the middle of November.

Snow and cold drive the doves to your door, and so your thoughts make new alliances.

Nov. 14, 1860. Yellow butterflies still.

Nov. 15, 1840. Over and above a man's business there must be a level of undisturbed serenity, only the more serene, as he is the more industrious, as within the reef encircling a coral isle there is always an expanse of still water where the depositions are going on which will finally raise it above the surface. He must preside over all he does. If his employment rob

him of a serene outlook over his life, it is but idle, though it be measuring the fixed stars. He must know no distracting cares.

The bad sense is the secondary one.

Nov. 15 [?], 1841. A mild summer sun shines over forest and lake. The earth looks as fair this morning as the Valhalla of the gods. Indeed our spirits never go beyond nature. In the woods there is an inexpressible happiness. Their mirth is but just repressed. In winter when there is but one green leaf for many rods, what warm content is in them! They are not rude, but tender, even in the severest cold. Their nakedness is their defense. All their sights and sounds are elixir to my spirit. They possess a choice health. God is not more well. Every sound is inspiriting, and fraught with the same mysterious assurance from the creaking of the boughs in January to the soft sigh of the wind in July.

How much of my well-being, think you, depends on the condition of my lungs and stomach, such cheap pieces of Nature as they, which indeed she is every day reproducing with prodigality? Is that arrow indeed fatal which rankles in the breast of the bird on the bough, in whose eye all this fair landscape is reflected, and whose voice still echoes through the wood?

This is my argument in reserve for all cases.

My love is invulnerable. Meet me on that ground, and you will find me strong. When I am condemned, and condemn myself, I think straightway, But I love some things. Therein I am whole and entire. Therein I am God-propped.

When I see the smoke curling up through the woods from some farmhouse invisible, it is more suggestive of the poetry of rural and domestic life than a nearer inspection can be. Up goes the smoke as quietly as the dew exhales in vapor, as busy as the housewife below, disposing itself in circles and wreaths. It is contemporary with a piece of human biography, and waves as a feather in some man's cap. Under that rod of sky there is some plot a-brewing, some ingenuity has planted itself, and we shall see what it will do. It tattles of more things than the boiling of a pot. It is but one of man's breaths. All that is interesting in history or fiction is transpiring beneath that cloud. The subject of all life and death, of happiness and grief, goes thereunder. When the traveler in the forest, attaining to some eminence, discovers a column of smoke in the distance, it is a very gentle hint to him of the presence of man. It seems as if it would establish friendly relations between them without more ado.

Nov. 15, 1851. Here is a rainy day which keeps me in the house. I am pleased to read in

Stoever's "Life of Linnæus" (Trapp's translation) that his father, being the first learned man of his family, changed his family name, and borrowed that of Linnæus (Linden-tree man) from a lofty linden tree which stood near his native place; "a custom," he says, "not unfrequent in Sweden, to take fresh appellations from natural objects." What more fit than that the advent of a new man into a family should acquire for it and transmit to posterity a new patronymic! Such a custom suggests, if it does not argue, an unabated vigor in the race, relating it to those primitive times when men did indeed acquire a name as memorable and distinct as their characters. It is refreshing to find a man whom you cannot feel satisfied to call John's son or Johnson's son, but by a new name applicable to himself alone, he being the first of his kind. We may say there have been but so many men as there are surnames, and of all the John Smiths there has been but one true John Smith, and he of course is dead. Get yourself, therefore, a name, and better a nickname than none at all. There was one enterprising boy came to school to me whose name was "Buster," and an honorable name it was. He was the only boy in the school, to my knowledge, who was named.

What shall we say of the comparative intellectual vigor of ancients and moderns, when we

read of Theophrastus, the father of botany, that he composed more than two hundred treatises in the third century before Christ and the seventeenth before printing, about twenty of which remain, and that these fill six volumes in folio printed at Venice ; among the last are two works on natural history, and one on the generation of plants.

"By his own avowal" [Pliny the elder's] "Natural History is a compilation from about twenty-five hundred different authors."

Nov. 15, 1853. After having some business dealings with men, I am occasionally chagrined, and feel as if I had done some wrong, and it is hard to forget the ugly circumstance. I see that such intercourse long continued would make one thoroughly prosaic, hard, and coarse. But the longest intercourse with Nature, though in her rudest moods, does not thus harden and make coarse. A hard, insensible man whom we liken to a rock, is indeed much harder than a rock. From hard, coarse, insensible men with whom I have no sympathy, I go to commune with the rocks, whose hearts are comparatively soft.

I was the other night elected a curator of our Lyceum, but was obliged to decline, because I did not know where to find good lecturers enough to make a course for the winter. We commonly think we cannot have a good journal in New

England, because we have not enough writers of ability. But we do not suspect likewise that we have not good lecturers enough to make a Lyceum.

This afternoon has wanted no condition to make it a gossamer day, it seems to me, but a calm atmosphere. Plainly the spiders cannot be abroad on the water, unless it is smooth. The one I witnessed this fall was at time of flood. May it be that they are driven out of their retreats like muskrats and snowfleas, and spin these lines for their support? Yet they work on the causeway, too.

Nov. 15, 1857. P. M. To Holden swamp and C. Miles swamp. My walk is the more lonely when I perceive that there are no ants upon the hillocks in field or wood. These are deserted mounds. They have commenced their winter sleep. The water is frozen solid in the leaves of the pitcher plant. This is the thickest ice I have seen. This water was most exposed in the cool swamp.

Going by my owl-nest oak, I saw that it had broken off at the hole, and the top fallen, but seeing in the cavity some leaves, I climbed up to see what kind of nest it was. I took out the leaves slowly, watching to see what spoils had been left with them. Some were pretty green, and all had evidently been placed there this fall

When I had taken all out with my left hand, holding on to the top of the stump with my right, I looked round into the cleft, and there I saw sitting nearly erect at the bottom in one corner, a little *Mus leucopus*, panting with fear, and with its large black eyes upon me. I held my face thus within seven or eight inches of it as long as I cared to hold on there, and it showed no sign of retreating. When I put in my hand, it merely withdrew downward into a snug little nest of hypnum and apparently the dirty-white, wool-like pappus of some plant, as big as a batting ball. Wishing to see its tail, I stirred it up again, when it suddenly rushed up the side of the cleft out over my shoulder and right arm, and leaped off, falling down through a thin hemlock spray some sixteen or eighteen feet to the ground on the hillside, where I lost sight of it. These nests, I suppose, are made when the trees are losing their leaves, as those of the squirrels are.

Nov. 15, 1859. A very pleasant Indian summer day. P. M. To Ledum swamp. I look up the river from the railroad bridge. It is perfectly smooth between the uniformly tawny meadows, and I see several muskrat cabins off Hubbard shore, distinctly outlined, as usual, in the November light. I hear in several places a faint cricket note, either a fine *z*-ing, or a distincter creak; also see and hear a grasshopper's

crackling flight. The clouds were never more fairly reflected in the water than now, as I look up the cyanean reach from Clamshell. A fine gossamer is streaming from every fence, tree, and stubble, though a careless observer would not notice it. As I look along over the grass toward the sun at Hosmer's field beyond Lupine Hill, I notice the shimmering effect of the gossamer, which seems to cover it almost like a web, occasioned by its motion, though the air is so still. This is noticed at least forty rods off. I turn down Witherel Glade, only that I may bring its tufts of andropogon between me and the sun.

It is a fact proving how universal and widely related any transcendent greatness is, like the apex of a pyramid to all beneath it, that when I now look over my extracts of the noblest poetry, the best is oftenest applicable in part or wholly to this man's [Captain John Brown's] position. Almost any noble verse may be read either as his elegy or eulogy, or be made the text of an oration about him; indeed such are now first discovered to be parts of a divinely established liturgy applicable to these rare cases for which the ritual of no church has provided, — the case of heroes, martyrs, and saints. This is the formula established on high, their burial service, to which every great genius has contributed its line or syllable. Of course the ritual of no church

which is wedded to the state can contain a service applicable to the case of a state criminal unjustly condemned, a martyr. The sense of grand poetry read by the light of this event is brought out distinctly, like an invisible writing held to the fire.

Nov. 16, 1850. I am accustomed to regard the smallest brook with as much interest, for the time being, as if it were the Orinoco or Mississippi, and when a tributary rill empties into it, it is like the confluence of famous rivers I have read of. When I cross one on a fence, I love to pause in mid-passage and look down into the water, and study its bottom, its little mystery. There is none so small but you may see a pickerel regarding you with a wary eye, or a pigmy trout dart from under the bank, or in spring perchance a sucker will have found its way far up the stream. You are sometimes astonished to see a pickerel far up some now shrunken rill where it is a mere puddle by the roadside. I have stooped to drink at a clear spring no bigger than a bushel basket, in a meadow, from which a rill was scarcely seen to dribble away, and seen lurking at its bottom two little pickerel not so big as my finger, sole monarchs of this their ocean, and who probably would never visit a larger water.

I hear deep amid the birches some row among

the birds or the squirrels, where evidently some mystery is being developed to them. The jay is on the alert, mimicking every woodland note. "What *has* happened? who's dead?" The twitter retreats before you, and you are never let into the secret. Some tragedy surely is being enacted, but murder will out. How many little dramas are enacted in the depths of the woods at which man is not present!

There seems to be in the fall a sort of attempt at spring, a rejuvenescence, as if the winter were not expected by a part of nature. Violets, dandelions, and some other flowers blossom again, and mulleins and innumerable other plants begin again to spring, and are only checked by the increasing cold. There is a slight uncertainty whether there will be any winter this year.

Some of our richest days are those in which no sun shines outwardly, but so much the more a sun shines inwardly. I love nature, I love the landscape, because it is so sincere. It never cheats me, it never jests, it is cheerfully, musically earnest. I lie and rely on the earth.

The sweet-scented life-everlasting has not lost its scent yet, but smells like the balm of the fields.

The partridge-berry leaves checker the ground on moist hillsides in the woods. Are not *they* properly called checker-berries?

My journal should be the record of my love. I would write in it only of the things I love, my affection for an aspect of the world, what I love to think of. I have no more distinctness or pointedness in my yearnings than an expanding bud which does indeed point to flower and fruit, to summer and autumn, but is aware of the warm sun and spring influence only. I feel ripe for something, yet do nothing, can't discover what that thing is. I feel fertile merely. It is seedtime with me. I have lain fallow long enough.

Notwithstanding a sense of unworthiness which possesses me not without reason, notwithstanding that I regard myself as a good deal of a scamp, yet for the most part the spirit of the universe is unaccountably kind to me, and I enjoy perhaps an unusual share of happiness. Yet I question sometimes if there is not some settlement to come.

Nov. 16, 1851. It is remarkable that the highest intellectual mood which the world tolerates is the perception of the truth of the most ancient revelations, now in some respects out of date, but any direct revelation, any original thought, it hates like virtue. So far as thinking is concerned, surely original thinking is the divinest thing. We should reverently watch for the least motions, the least scintillations of

thought in this sluggish world, and men should run to and fro on the occasion more than at an earthquake. We check and repress the divinity that stirs within us to fall down and worship the divinity that is dead without us. I go to see many a good man or good woman, so called, and utter freely that thought which alone it was given me to utter, but there was a man who lived a long, long time ago and his name was Moses, and another whose name was Christ, and if your thought does not, or does not appear to, coincide with what they said, the good man or good woman has no ears to hear you. They think they love God! It is only his old clothes, which they make scarecrows for the children. When will they come nearer to God than in these very children? A man lately preached here against the abuse of the sabbath, and recommended to walk in the fields and dance on that day. Good advice enough, which may take effect after a while. But with the mass of men, the reason is convinced long before the life is. They may see the church and the sabbath to be false, but nothing else to be true. One woman in the neighborhood says, "Nobody can hear Mr. —— preach, hear him through, without seeing that he is a good man." "Well, is there any truth in what he says?" asks another. "Oh yes, it 's true enough, but then it won't do, you

know, it won't do. Now, there 's our George, he 's got the whole of it; and when I say, 'Come, George, put on your things, and go along to meeting,' he says, 'No, mother, I 'm going out into the fields.' It won't do." The fact is, this woman has not character and religion enough to exert a controlling influence over her children by her example, and knows of no such police as the church and the minister.

If it were not for death and funerals, I think the institution of the church would not stand longer. The necessity that men be decently buried, our fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters and children (notwithstanding the danger that they be buried alive), will long, if not forever, prevent our laying violent hands on it. If salaries were stopped off, and men walked out of this world bodily at last, the minister and his vocation would be gone.

That sounds like a fine mode of expressing gratitude referred to by Linnæus. Hermann was a botanist who gave up his place to Tournefort, who was unprovided for. "Hermann," says Linnæus, "came afterwards to Paris, and Tournefort in honor of him ordered the fountains to play in the royal garden."

Nov. 16, 1852. 9 A. M. Sail up river to Lee's bridge. Colder weather and very windy, but still no snow. Very little ice along the

edge of the river which does not melt before night. Muskrat houses completed; interesting objects, looking down a river-reach at this season, and our river should not be represented without one or two of these cones. They are quite conspicuous half a mile distant, and are of too much importance to be omitted in the river landscape. I see one duck. The pines on shore look very cold, reflecting a silvery light. The waves run high with white caps, and communicate a pleasant motion to the boat. At Lee's Cliff the *Cerastium viscosum.* We sailed up Well-meadow brook. The water is singularly grayish, clear and cold, the bottom of the brook showing great nuphar roots, like its ribs, with some budding leaves.

The water is frozen in the pitcher-plant leaf. The swamp pink and blueberry buds attract.

Nov. 16, 1854. P. M. Sailed to Hubbard's bridge. Almost every muskrat's house is covered by the flood, though they were unusually high as well as numerous, and the river is not nearly so high as last year. I see where they have begun to raise them another story. A few cranberries begin to wash up, and rails, boards, etc., may now be collected by wreckers.

Nov. 16, 1858. Preaching? lecturing? Who are ye that ask for these things? What do you want to hear, ye puling infants? A trumpet

sound that would train you up to manhood? or a nurse's lullaby? The preachers and lecturers deal with men of straw, as they are men of straw themselves. Why, a free-spoken man, of sound lungs, cannot draw a long breath, without causing your rotten institutions to come toppling down, by the vacuum he makes. Your church is a baby-house made of blocks, and so of the state. It would be a relief to breathe one's self occasionally, among men. Freedom of speech! It hath not entered into your hearts to conceive what those words mean. The church, the state, the school, the magazine, think they are liberal and free! It is the freedom of a prison yard. What is it you tolerate, you church to-day? Not truth, but a life-long hypocrisy. The voice that goes up from the monthly concerts is not so brave and cheery as that which rises from the frog-ponds of the land. Look at your editors of popular magazines. I have dealt with two or three of the most liberal of them. They are afraid to print a *whole* sentence, a *sound* sentence, a free-spoken sentence. We want to get 30,000 subscribers, and will do anything to get them. They consult the D. D.'s and all the letters of the alphabet, before printing a sentence.

Nov. 17, 1837. If there is nothing new on earth, still there is something new in the heav-

ens. We have always a resource in the skies. They are constantly turning a new page to view. The wind sets the types in their blue ground, and the inquiring may always read a new truth there.

Nov. 17, 1850. I found this afternoon in a field of winter rye, a snapping-turtle's egg, white and elliptical like a pebble, mistaking it for which I broke it. The little turtle was perfectly formed, even to the dorsal ridge, which was distinctly visible.

Nov. 17, 1851. All things tend to flow to him who can make the best use of them, even away from their legal owner. A thief, finding with the property of the Italian naturalist, Donati, whom he had robbed abroad, a collection of rare African seeds, forwarded them to Linnæus from Marseilles. Donati suffered shipwreck, and never returned.

Nov. 17, 1853. I notice that many plants about this season of the year or earlier, after they have died down at top, put forth fresh and conspicuous radical leaves against another spring; so some human beings in the November of their days, exhibit some fresh radical greenness, which, though the frosts may soon nip it, indicates and confirms their essential vitality. When their summer leaves have faded and fallen, they put forth fresh radical leaves which

sustain the life in their root still, against a new spring. The dry fields have, for a long time, been spotted with the small radical leaves of the fragrant life-everlasting, not to mention the large primrose, John's-wort, etc. Almost every plant, although it may show no greenness above ground, if you dig about it, will be found to have fresh shoots already pointing upward, and ready to burst forth in the spring.

Nov. 17, 1854. Paddled up river to Clamshell, and sailed back. I think it must have been a fishhawk which I saw hovering over the meadow and my boat (a raw, cloudy afternoon), now and then sustaining itself in one place, a hundred feet or more above the water, intent on a fish, with a hovering or fluttering motion of the wings, somewhat like a kingfisher. Its wings were very long, slender, and curved in outline of front edge, ⁀ thus, perhaps. I think there was some white on rump. It alighted near the top of an oak within rifle-shot of me, afterward on the tip top of a maple by waterside, looking very large.

Nov. 17, 1855. It is interesting to me to talk with Rice, he lives so thoroughly and satisfactorily to himself. He has learned that rare art of living, the very elements of which most persons do not know. His life has been not a failure, but a success. Seeing me going to

sharpen some plane irons, and hearing me complain of the want of tools, he said I ought to have a chest of tools. But I said it was not worth the while. I should not use them enough to pay for them. "You would use them more, if you had them," said he. "When I came to do a piece of work, I used to find commonly that I wanted a certain tool, and I made it a rule first always to make that tool. I have spent as much as $3,000 thus on my tools." Comparatively speaking, his life is a success; not such a failure as most men's. He gets more out of any enterprise than his neighbors, for he helps himself more, and hires less. Whatever pleasure there is in it he enjoys. By good sense and calculation he has become rich, and has invested his property well, yet practices a fair and neat economy, dwells not in untidy luxury. It costs him less to live, and he gets more out of life than others. To get his living or keep it is not a hasty or disagreeable toil. He works slowly, but surely, enjoying the sweet of it. He buys a piece of meadow at a profitable rate, works it in pleasant weather, he and his son, when they are inclined, goes a-fishing or bee-hunting, or rifle-shooting quite as often, and thus the meadow gets redeemed, and potatoes get planted perchance, and he is very sure to have a good crop stored in his cellar in the fall,

and some to sell. He always has the best of potatoes there. In the same spirit in which he and his son tackle up their Dobbin (he never keeps a fast horse) and go a-spearing or fishing through the ice, they also tackle up and go to their Sudbury farm to hoe or harvest a little, and when they return they bring home in their hay-rigging a load of stumps which had impeded their labors, but may supply them with their winter wood. All the woodchucks they shoot or trap in the bean-field are brought home also. Thus their life is a long sport, and they know not what hard times are.

Labaume says that he wrote his journal of the campaign in Russia each night in the midst of incredible danger and suffering, with "a raven's quill and a little gunpowder mixed with some melted snow, in the hollow of my hand," the quill cut and mended with "the knife with which I had carved my scanty morsel of horse flesh." Such a statement promises well for the writer's qualifications to treat such a theme.

Nov. 17, 1858. P. M. Up Assabet. The muskrats are more active since the cold weather. I see more of them about the river now, swimming across back and forth, and diving in the middle where I lose them. They dive off the round-backed black mossy stones, which when small and slightly exposed look much like

themselves. In swimming, show commonly three parts, with water between. One, sitting in the sun, as if for warmth, on the opposite shore to me, looks quite reddish-brown. They avail themselves of the edge of the ice now found along the sides of the river, to feed on.

The very sunlight on the pale-brown bleached fields is an interesting object these cold days. I naturally look toward it as to a wood fire. Not only different objects are presented to our attention at different seasons of the year, but we are in a frame of body and of mind to appreciate different objects at different seasons. I see one thing when it is cold and another when it is warm.

We are interested at this season by the manifold ways in which the light is reflected to us. Ascending a little knoll covered with sweet fern, the sun appearing but little above the sweet fern, its light was reflected from a dense mass of the bare, downy twigs of this plant in a surprising manner which would not be believed, if described. It was quite like the sunlight reflected from grass and weeds covered with hoar frost. Yet in an ordinary light, these are but dark or dusky-looking with scarcely a noticeable downiness. But as I saw them, there was a perfect halo of light resting on the knoll. I moved to right or left. A myriad of surfaces are now

prepared to reflect the light. This is one of the hundred silvery lights of November. The setting sun, too, is reflected from windows more brightly than at any other season. "November lights" would be a theme for me.

Nature is moderate, and loves degrees. Winter is not all white and sere. Some trees are evergreen to cheer us, and on the forest floor our eyes do not fall on sere brown leaves alone, but some evergreen shrubs are placed there to relieve the eye. Mountain laurel, lambkill, checkerberry, wintergreen, etc., keep up the semblance of summer still.

Nov. 17, 1859. Another Indian-summer day, as fair as any we have had. I go down the railroad to Andromeda Ponds this afternoon.

I have been so absorbed of late in Captain Brown's fate as to be surprised wherever I detected the old routine surviving still, met persons going about their affairs indifferent. It appeared strange to me that the little dipper should be still diving in the river as of yore, and it suggested to me that this grebe might be diving here when Concord shall be no more. Any affecting human event may blind our eyes to natural objects.

How fair and memorable this prospect, when you stand opposite the sun, these November afternoons, and look over the red andromeda

swamp, a glowing, warm brown-red in the Indian summer sun, like a bed of moss in a hollow in the woods, with gray high-blueberry, and straw-colored grasses interspersed; and when, going round it, you look over it in the opposite direction, it presents a gray aspect.

Nov. 18, 1837. Nature makes no noise. The howling storm, the rustling leaf, the pattering rain, are no disturbance. There is an essential and unexplored harmony in them. Why is it that thought flows with so deep and sparkling a current when the sound of distant music strikes the ear? When I would muse I complain not of a rattling tune on the piano, a Battle of Prague even, if it be harmony, but an irregular, discordant drumming is intolerable.

When a shadow flits across the landscape of the soul, where is the substance? Has it always its origin in sin? and is that sin in me?

Nov. 18, 1841. Some men make their due impression upon their generation because a petty occasion is enough to call forth all their energies; but are there not others who would rise to much higher levels, whom the world has never provoked to make the effort? I believe there are men now living who have never opened their mouths in a public assembly, in whom nevertheless there is such a well of eloquence that the appetite of any age could never exhaust

it, who pine for an occasion worthy of them, and will pine till they are dead, who can admire as well as the rest the flowing speech of the orator, but do yet miss the thunder and lightning, and visible sympathy of the elements which would garnish their own utterance. The age may well pine that it cannot put to use the gift of the gods. He lives on still unconcerned, not needing to be used. The greatest occasion will be the slowest to come.

If, in any strait, I see a man fluttered and his ballast gone, then I lose all hope of him, he is undone; but if he reposes still, though he do nothing else worthy of him, if he is still a man in reserve, there is then everything to hope of him.

Sometimes a body of men do unconsciously assert that their will is fate, that the right is decided by their fiat, without appeal, and when this is the case, they can never be mistaken; as when one man is quite silenced by the thrilling eloquence of another, and submits to be neglected, as to his fate, because such is not the willful vote of the assembly, but their instinctive decision.

Nov. 18, 1851. Surveying these days the Ministerial lot. Now at sundown I hear the hooting of an owl, hōō hóo hóo-hōōrer-hóo. It sounds like the hooting of an idiot or a maniac broke loose. This is faintly answered in a dif-

ferent strain, apparently from a greater distance, almost as if it were the echo, that is, so far as the *succession* is concerned. I heard it last evening. The men who help me, call it the hooting owl, and think it is the cat-owl. It is a sound admirably suited to the swamp and to the twilight woods, suggesting a vast undeveloped nature which men have not recognized.

The chopper who works in the woods all day for many weeks or months at a time, becomes intimately acquainted with them in his way. He is more open, in many respects, to the impressions they are fitted to make than the naturalist who goes to see them. He is not liable to exaggerate insignificant features. He really forgets himself, forgets to observe, and at night he *dreams* of the swamp, its phenomena and events. Not so the naturalist; enough of his unconscious life does not pass there. A man can hardly be said to be *there*, if he *knows* that he is there, or to go there if he knows where he is going. The man who is bent upon his work is frequently in the best attitude to observe what is irrelevant to his work. (*Mem.* Wordsworth's observations on relaxed attention.) You must be conversant with things for a long time to know much about them, like the moss which has hung from the spruce, and as the partridge and the rabbit are acquainted with the thickets, and

at length have acquired the color of the places they frequent. If the man of science can put all his knowledge into propositions, the woodman has a great deal of incommunicable knowledge.

Nov. 18, 1852. Yarrow and tansy still.

Nov. 18, 1853. Conchologists call those shells "which are fished up from the depths of the ocean" and are never seen on the shore, *pelagii*, but those which are cast on shore and are never so delicate and beautiful as the former, on account of exposure and abrasion, *littorales*. So is it with the thoughts of poets. Some are fresh from the deep sea, radiant with unimagined beauty, — *pelagii;* but others are comparatively worn, having been tossed by many a tide, scaled off, abraded, and eaten by worms, — *littorales*.

Nov. 18, 1854. Saw sixty geese go over the Great Fields in one waving line broken from time to time by their crowding on each other and vainly endeavoring to form into a harrow, honking all the while.

Nov. 18, 1855. Men foolishly prefer gold to that of which it is the symbol, simple, honest, independent labor. Can gold be said to buy food, if it does not buy an appetite for food? It is fouler and uglier to have too much than not to have enough.

Nov. 18 [?], 1857. Much cold slate-colored cloud, bare twigs seen gleaming toward the

light like gossamer, pure green of pines where old leaves have fallen, reddish or yellowish-brown oak leaves rustling on the hillsides, very pale brown, bleaching almost hoary fine grass or hay in the fields, akin to the frost which has killed it, and flakes of clear yellow sunlight falling on it here and there, — such is November. The fine grass killed by the frost, and bleached till it is almost silvery, has clothed the fields for a long time.

Now, as in the spring, we rejoice in sheltered and sunny places. Some corn is left out still.

Flannery is the hardest-working man I know. Before sunrise and long after sunset he is taxing his unweariable muscles. The result is a singular cheerfulness. He is always in good spirits. He often overflows with his joy, when you perceive no occasion for it. If only the gate sticks, some of it bubbles up and overflows in his passing comment on that accident. How much mere industry proves! There is a sparkle often in his passing remark, and his voice is really like that of a bird.

In one light, these are old and worn-out fields that I ramble over, and men have gone to law about them long before I was born, but I trust that I ramble over them in a new fashion, and redeem them.

There are many ways of feeling one's pulse.

In a healthy state, the constant experience is a pleasurable sensation or sentiment. For instance, in such a state I find myself in perfect connection with nature, and the perception and remembrance even, of any natural phenomena is attended with a gentle, pleasurable excitement. Prevailing sights and sounds make the impression of beauty and music on me. But in sickness all is deranged. I had yesterday a kink in my back and a general cold, and as usual it amounted to a cessation of life. I lost for the time my support or relation to nature. Sympathy with nature is an evidence of perfect health. You cannot perceive beauty but with a serene mind. The cheaper your amusements, the safer and surer. They who think much of theatres, operas, and the like, are beside themselves. Each man's necessary path, though as obscure and apparently uneventful as that of a beetle in the grass, is the way to the deepest joys he is susceptible of. Though he converses only with moles and fungi, and disgraces his relatives, it is no matter, if he knows what is steel to his flint. Many a man who should rather describe his dinner imposes on us with a history of the Grand Khan.

Nov. 18, 1858. P. M. To Conantum. I look south from the Cliff, the westering sun just out of sight behind the hill. Its rays from

those bare twigs across the pond are bread and cheese to me. So many oak leaves have fallen that the white birch stems are more distinct amid the young oaks. I see to the bone, see those bare birches prepared to stand the winter through on the hillsides. They never sing, What's this dull town to me? The maples skirting the meadows in dense phalanxes, look like light infantry advanced for a swamp fight. Ah, dear *Novem*ber, you must be sacred to the *nine*, surely. The willow catkins already peep out one fourth of an inch. Early crowfoot is reddened at Lee's.

Nov. 19, 1839.

> Light-hearted, thoughtless, shall I take my way,
> When I to thee this being have resigned,
> Well knowing, on some future day,
> With usurer's craft, more than myself to find.

Nov. 19 [?], 1857. I see where a mouse, which had a hole under a stump, has eaten out clean the inside of the little seeds of the *Prinos verticillata* berries. What pretty fruit for them, these bright berries! They run up the twigs in the night, and gather this shining fruit, take out the small seeds, and eat these kernels at the entrance to their burrows. The ground is strewn with them there.

Nov. 20, 1850. Desor, who has been among the Indians at Lake Superior this summer, told

me the other day that they had a particular name for each species of tree, as of the maple, but they had but one word for flowers. They did not distinguish the species of the last.

It is often the unscientific man who discovers the new species. It would be strange if it were not so. But we are accustomed properly to call that only a scientific discovery which knows the relative value of the thing discovered, and uncovers a fact to mankind.

Nov. 20, 1851. It is often said that melody can be heard farther than noise, and the finest melody farther than the coarsest. I think there is truth in this, and that accordingly those strains of the piano which reach me here in my attic stir me so much more than the sounds which I should hear if I were below in the parlor, because they are so much purer and diviner melody. They who sit farthest off from the noisy and bustling world are not at pains to distinguish what is sweet and musical, for that alone can reach them, that chiefly comes down to posterity.

Hard and steady and engrossing labor with the hands, especially out of doors, is invaluable to the literary man, and serves him directly. Here I have been for six days surveying in the woods, and yet when I get home at evening somewhat weary at last, and beginning to feel

that I have nerves, I find myself more susceptible than usual to the finest influences, as music and poetry. The very air can intoxicate me, or the least sight or sound, as if my finer senses had acquired an appetite by their fast.

Mr. J. Hosmer tells me that one spring he saw a red squirrel gnaw the bark of a maple, and then suck the juice, and this he repeated many times.

Nov. 20, 1853. I once came near speculating in cranberries. Being put to it to raise the wind, and having occasion to go to New York, to peddle some pencils which I had made, as I passed through Boston I went to Quincy market and inquired the price of cranberries. The dealer took me down cellar, asked if I wanted wet or dry, and showed me them. I gave it to be understood that I might want an indefinite quantity. It made a slight sensation among the dealers, and for aught I know, raised the price of the berry for a time. I then visited various New York packets, and was told what would be the freight on deck and in the hold, and one skipper was very anxious for my freight. When I got to New York, I again visited the markets as a purchaser, and "the best of eastern cranberries" were offered me by the barrel at a cheaper rate than I could buy them in Boston. I was obliged to manufacture $1,000 worth of

pencils, and slowly dispose of, and finally sacrifice them, in order to pay an assumed debt of $100.

What enhances my interest in dew (I am thinking of summer) is the fact that it is so distinct from rain, formed most abundantly after bright, starlight nights, a product especially of the clear, serene air, the manna of fair weather, the upper side of rain, as the country above the clouds. That nightly rain, called dew, gathers and falls in so low a stratum that our heads tower above it like mountains in an ordinary shower. It only consists with comparative fair weather above our heads. Those warm volumes of air forced high up the hillsides in summer nights are driven thither to drop their dew, like kine to their yards to be milked, that the moisture they hold may be condensed, and so dew formed before morning on the tops of the hills. A writer in "Harper's Magazine," vol. vii., p. 505, says that the mist at evening does not rise, "but gradually forms higher up in the air." He calls it, the moisture of the air become visible, says there is most dew in clear nights because clouds prevent the cooling down of the air, they radiate the heat of the earth back to it, and that a strong wind, by keeping the air in motion, prevents its heat from passing off. He says also that bad conductors of heat have al-

ways most dew on them, and that wool or swan's down are "good for experimenting on the quantity of dew falling," weighed before and after; thinks it not safe to walk in clear nights, especially after midnight when the dew is most abundantly forming, better in cloudy nights, which are drier; also thinks it not prudent to venture out until the sun begins to rise, and warms the air; but I think this prudence begets a tenderness that will catch more cold at noonday than the opposite hardiness at midnight.

Nov. 21, 1853. Is not the dew but a humble, gentler rain, the nightly rain, above which we raise our heads, and unobstructedly behold the stars? The mountains are giants which tower above the rain, as we above the dew on the grass. It only wets their feet.

Nov. 20, 1854. 7 A. M. To Boston. 9 A. M. Boston to New York by express train. See the reddish soil (red sandstone?) all through Connecticut. Beyond Hartford a range of rocky hills crossing the State on each side the railroad. The second one very precipitous, and apparently terminating at East Rock, New Haven. Pleasantest part of the whole route between Springfield and Hartford along the river, perhaps including the hilly region this side of Springfield. Reached Canal Street at 5 P. M., or candle-light. Started for Philadelphia from

foot of Liberty Street at 6 P. M., by Newark, Bordentown, and Camden Ferry, all in the dark; saw only the glossy paneling of the cars reflected out into the dark like the magnificent lit façade of a row of edifices reaching all the way to Philadelphia, except when we stopped, and a lantern or two showed us a ragged boy and the dark buildings of some New Jersey town. Arrived at 10 P. M. Time, four hours from New York, thirteen from Boston, fifteen from Concord. Put up at Jones's Exchange Hotel, 77 Dock Street. Lodgings, thirty-seven cents and a half per night; meals, separate. Not to be named with French's in New York.

Nov. 21, 1854. Was admitted into the building of the Academy of Natural Sciences. Its collection of birds said to be the largest in the world. They belonged to the son of Massena (Prince of Essling?), and were sold at auction, bought by a Yankee for $22,000, over all the crowned heads of Europe, and presented to the Academy. Other collections also are added to this. The Academy has received great donations.

Furness described a lotus identical with an Egyptian one, as found somewhere down the river below Philadelphia.

Lodged at the United States Hotel, opposite the Girard (formerly United States) bank.

Nov. 22, 1854. Left at 7.30 A. M., for New

York. Saw Greeley. He took me to the New Opera House, where I heard Grisi and her troupe. He appeared to know and be known by everybody. Was admitted free to the opera, and we were led by a page to various parts of the house at different times.

Nov. 20, 1857. In books, that which is most generally interesting is what comes home to the most cherished private experience of the greatest number. It is not the book of him who has traveled farthest on the surface of the globe, but of him who has lived the deepest, and been the most at home. If an equal emotion is excited by a familiar homely phenomenon as by the pyramids, there is no advantage in seeing the pyramids. It is on the whole better, as it is simpler, to use the common language. We require that the reporter be very firmly planted before the facts which he observes, not a mere passer-by, hence the facts cannot be too homely. A man is worth most to himself and to others, whether as an observer, or poet, or neighbor, or friend, who is most contented and at home. There his life is the most intense, and he loses the fewest moments. Familiar and surrounding objects are the best symbols and illustrations of his life. If a man who has had deep experiences should endeavor to describe them in a book of travels, it would be to use the language

of a wandering tribe instead of a universal language. The poet has made the best roots in his native soil, and is the hardest to transplant. The man who is often thinking that it would be better to be somewhere else than where he is, excommunicates himself. Here I have been these forty years learning the language of these fields that I may the better express myself. If I should travel to the prairies, I should much less understand them, and my past life would serve me but ill to describe them. Many a weed stands for more of life to me than the big trees of California would if I should go there. We need only travel enough to give our intellects an airing. In spite of Malthus and the rest, there will be plenty of room in this world, if every man will mind his own business. I have not heard of any planet running against another yet.

P. M. To Ministerial Swamp. Some bank-swallows' nests are exposed by the caving of the bank at Clamshell. The very smallest hole is about two and a half inches wide horizontally, and barely one high. All are much wider than high. One nest, with an egg in it still, is completely exposed. The cavity at the end is shaped like a thick hoe-cake or lens, about six inches wide and somewhat more than two thick vertically. The nest is a regular but shallow

one, made simply of stubble, about five inches in diameter and three quarters of an inch deep.

Returning, I see, methinks, two gentlemen plowing a field as if to try an agricultural experiment. As it is very cold and windy, both plowman and driver have their coats on. But when I get closer, I hear the driver speak in a peculiarly sharp and petulant manner to the plowman, as they are turning the land furrow, and I know at once that they belong to those two races which are so slow to amalgamate. Thus my little idyl is disturbed.

In the large Wheeler field, *Ranunculus bulbosus* in full bloom.

The hardy tree sparrow has taken the place of the chipping and song sparrow, so much like the former that most do not know it is another. His faint lisping chip will keep up our spirits till another spring.

I observed this afternoon how some bullocks had a little sportiveness forced upon them. They were running down a steep declivity to water, when, feeling themselves unusually impelled by gravity downward, they took the hint even as boys do, flourished round gratuitously, tossing their hind-quarters into the air, and shaking their heads at each other; but what increases the ludicrousness of it to me is the fact that such capers are never accompanied by a

smile. Who does not believe that their step is less elastic, their movement more awkward, from their long domesticity?

Nov. 20, 1855. Again I hear that sharp, crackling, snapping sound, and hastening to the window I find that another of the pitch-pine cones, gathered November 7th, lying in the sun, or which the sun has scorched, has separated its scales very slightly at the apex. It is only discoverable on a close inspection, but while I look the whole cone opens its scales with a smart crackling, and rocks, and seems to bristle up, scattering the dry pitch on the surface. They all thus fairly loosen and open, though they do not at once spread wide open. It is almost like the disintegration of glass. As soon as the tension is relaxed in one part, it is relaxed in every part.

Nov. 20, 1858. P. M. To Ministerial Swamp. [Martial Miles] says that a marsh hawk had a nest in his meadow several years, and though he shot the female three times, the male, with but little delay, returned with a new mate. He often watched these birds, and saw that the female could tell when the male was coming, a long way off. He thought the male fed her and the young all together. She would utter a scream when she perceived him, and rising into the air (before or after the scream?), she turned

over with her talons uppermost, while he passed some three rods above, and caught without fail the prey which he let drop, and then carried it to her young. He had seen her do this many times, and always without failing.

I go across the great Wheeler pasture. It is a cool but pleasant November afternoon. The glory of November is in its silvery, sparkling lights, the air is so clear, and there are so many bare, polished, bleached or hoary surfaces to reflect the light. Few things are more exhilarating, if it is only moderately cold, than to walk over bare pastures, and see the abundant sheeny light, like a universal halo, reflected from the russet and bleached earth. The earth shines perhaps more than in spring, for the reflecting surfaces are less dimmed now. It is not a red, but a white light. There are several kinds of twigs, this year's shoots of shrubs, which have a slight down, or haziness, hardly perceptible in ordinary lights, though held in the hand, but which seen toward the sun reflect a sheeny, silvery light. Such are not only the sweet-fern, but the hazel in a less degree, alder twigs, and even the short huckleberry twigs, also lespedeza stems. It is as if they were covered with a myriad fine spiculæ, which reflect a dazzling white light exceedingly warming to the spirits and imagination. This gives a character of

snug warmth and cheerfulness to the swamp, as if it were a place where the sun consorted with rabbits and partridges. Each individual hair on every such shoot above the swamp is bathed in glowing sunlight, and is directly conversant with the day god.

As I returned over Conantum summit yesterday just before sunset, and was admiring the various rich browns of the shrub-oak plain across the river, which seemed to me more wholesome and remarkable, as more permanent than the late brilliant colors, I was surprised to see a broad halo traveling with me, and always opposite the sun to me, at least one fourth mile off, and some three rods wide on the shrub oaks.

The rare, wholesome and permanent beauty of withered oak leaves of various hues of brown, mottling a hillside, especially seen when the sun is low, Quaker colors, sober ornaments, beauty that quite satisfies the eye, — the richness and variety are the same as before, the colors different, more incorruptible and lasting.

Sprague of Cohasset states to the Natural History Society Sept. 1, 1858, that the light under the tail of the common glow-worm "remained for fifteen minutes after death."

Nov. 21, 1850. The witch hazel blossom on Conantum has, for the most part, lost its ribbons now.

I saw the sun falling on a distant white-pine wood whose gray and moss-covered stems were visible amid the green, in an angle where this forest abutted on a hill covered with shrub oaks. It was like looking into dreamland. It is one of the avenues to my future. Certain coincidences like this are accompanied by a certain flash as of hazy lightning flooding all the world suddenly with a tremulous, serene light which it is difficult to see long at a time.

I saw Fair Haven Pond with its island, and a strip of perfectly still and smooth water in the lee of the island, and two hawks, fish-hawks, perhaps, sailing over it. I did not see how it could be improved. Yet I do not see what these things can be. I begin to see such an object when I cease to understand it, and see that I did not realize or appreciate it before, but I get no further than this. How adapted these forms and colors to my eye! A meadow and an island! What are these things? Yet the hawks and the ducks keep so aloof! and nature is so reserved! I am made to love the pond and the meadow, as the wind is made to ripple the water.

Nov. 21, 1851. Better men than they hire to come here never lecture. Why don't they ask Edmund Hosmer or George Minott? I would rather hear them decline than most of these hirelings lecture.

Nov. 21 [?], 1857. P. M. Up Assabet. Just above the grape-hung birches, my attention was drawn to a singular looking dry leaf or parcel of leaves on the shore about a rod off. Then I thought it might be the dry and yellowed skeleton of a bird with all its ribs; then, the shell of a turtle, or possibly some large dry oak leaves peculiarly curled and cut; and then all at once I saw that it was a woodcock, perfectly still, with its head drawn in, standing on its great pink feet. I had apparently noticed only the yellowish-brown portions of the plumage, referring the dark-brown to the shore behind it. May it not be that the yellowish-brown markings of the bird correspond somewhat to its skeleton? At any rate, with my eye steadily on it from a point within a rod, I did not for a considerable time suspect it to be a living creature. Examining the shore after it had flown with a whistling flight, I saw that there was a clear shore of mud between the water and the edge of ice crystals about two inches wide, melted so far by the lapse of the water, and all along the edge of the ice, for a rod or two at least, there was a hole where it had thrust its bill down, probing every half inch, frequently closer. Some animal life must be collected at that depth just in that narrow space, savory morsels for this bird. . . . The chubby bird darted away zigzag, carrying its

long tongue-case carefully before it over the witch hazel bushes. This is its walk, the portion of the shore, the narrow strip still left open and unfrozen between the water's edge and the ice.

Nov. 21, 1860. Another finger-cold evening, which I improve in pulling my turnips, the usual amusement of such weather, before they shall be frozen in. It is worth while to see how green and lusty they are yet, still adding to their stock of nutriment for another year, and between the green and also withering leaves it does me good to see their great crimson round or scalloped tops sometimes quite above ground, they are so bold. They remind you of rosy cheeks in cold weather, and indeed there is a relationship. Even pulling turnips when the first cold weather numbs your fingers, like every other kind of harvestry, is interesting, if you have been the sower, and have not sown too many.

Nov. 22, 1851. At the brook [Saw Mill Brook] the partridge berries checker the ground with their leaves, now interspersed with red berries. The cress at the bottom of the brook is doubly beautiful now, because it is green while most other plants are sere. It rises and falls and waves with the current.

As I returned through Hosmer's field, the sun was just setting beneath a black cloud by which it had been obscured, and as it had been a cold

and windy afternoon, its light, which fell suddenly on some white pines between me and it, lighting them up like a shimmering fire, and also on the oak leaves and chestnut stems, was quite a circumstance. It was, from the contrast between the dark and comfortless afternoon, and this bright and cheerful light, almost fire. The eastern hills and woods, too, were clothed in a still golden light. It was a sort of Indian summer in the day, which thus far has been denied to the year. After a cold, gray day, this cheering light almost warms us by its resemblance to fire.

Nov. 22, 1853. Geese went over yesterday and to-day, also.

If there is any one with whom we have a quarrel, it is most likely such a person makes a demand on us which we disappoint.

I was just thinking it would be fine to get a specimen leaf from each changing tree and shrub and plant in autumn, in September and October, when it had got its brightest, characteristic color, intermediate in its transition from the green to the russet or brown state, the color of its ripeness, outline it, and copy its color exactly with paint in a book, a book which should be a memorial of October, be entitled October Hues, or Autumnal Tints. I remember especially the beautiful yellow of the *Populus grandidentata*

and the tints of the scarlet maple. What a memento such a book would be, beginning with the earliest reddening of the leaves, woodbine, ivy, etc., and the lake of radical leaves, down to the latest oaks. I might get the impression of their veins and outlines in summer, and after, color them.

Nov. 22, 1858. About the first of November, a wild pig from the West, said to weigh three hundred pounds, jumped out of a car at the depot, and made for the woods. The owner had to give up the chase at once not to lose his passage, while some railroad employees pursued the pig even to the woods one and a half miles off, but there the pig turned and pursued them so resolutely that they ran for their lives, and one climbed a tree. The next day being Sunday, they turned out in force with a gun and a large mastiff, but still the pig had the best of it, fairly frightened the men by his fierce charges, and the dog was so wearied and injured by the pig that the men were obliged to carry him in their arms. The pig stood it better than the dog, ran between the gun-man's legs, threw him over and hurt his shoulder, though pierced in many places by a pitchfork. At the last accounts, he had been driven or baited into a barn in Lincoln, but no one durst enter, and they were preparing to shoot him. Such pork might be called venison.

He was caught at last in a snare, and so conveyed to Brighton.

Nov. 22, 1860. P. M. To northwest part of Sudbury. The *Linaria Canadensis* [Wild Toad-flax] is still freshly blooming. It is the freshest flower I notice now. Considerable ice lasting all day on the meadows and cold pools.

This is a very beautiful November day, a cool but clear crystalline air, through which even the white pines, with their silvery sheen, are an affecting sight. It is a day to behold and to ramble over the stiffening and withered surface of the tawny earth. Every plant's down glistens with a silvery light along the Marlboro' road, the sweet fern, the lespedeza, and bare blueberry twigs, to say nothing of the weather-worn tufts of *Andropogon scoparius*. A thousand bare twigs gleam like cobwebs in the sun. I rejoice in the bare, bleak, hard, and barren-looking surface of the tawny pastures, the firm outline of the hills, so convenient to walk over, and the air so bracing and wholesome. Though you are finger-cold toward night, and you cast a stone on your first ice, and see the unmelted crystals under every bank, it is glorious November weather. You enjoy not only the bracing coolness, but all the heat and sunlight there is, reflected back to you from the earth. The sandy road itself lit by the November sun is beautiful. Shrub oaks

and young oaks generally, and hazel bushes, and other hardy shrubs are your companions, as if it were an iron age, yet in simplicity, innocence, and strength, a golden one.

It is glorious to consider how independent man is of all enervating luxuries, and the poorer he is in respect to them, the richer he is. Summer is gone with its infinite wealth, and still nature is genial to man. Though he no longer bathes in the stream, or reclines on the bank, or plucks berries on the hills, still he beholds the same inaccessible beauty around him. What though he has no juice of the grape stored up for him in cellars, the air itself is wine of an older vintage, and far more sanely exhilarating than any cellar affords. It is ever some gouty senior, and not a blithe child that drinks or cares for that so famous wine. Though so many phenomena which we lately admired have now vanished, others are more remarkable and interesting than before. The smokes from distant chimneys, not only greater because more fire is required, but more distinct in the cooler atmosphere, are a very pleasing sight, and conduct our thoughts quickly to the roof and hearth and family beneath, revealing the homes of men.

Maynard's yard and frontage, and all his barns and fences are singularly neat and substantial, and the high road is in effect converted

into a private way through his grounds. It suggests unspeakable peace and happiness. Yet, strange to tell, I noticed that he had a tiger instead of a cock for a vane on his barn, and he himself looked overworked. He had allured the surviving forest trees to grow into ancestral trees about his premises, and so attach themselves to him as if he had planted them. The dirty highway was so subdued that it seemed as if it were lost there. He had all but stretched a bar across it. Each traveler must have felt some misgivings, as if he were trespassing. However, the farmer's life expresses only such content as an ox in his yard, chewing the cud.

What though your hands are numb with cold, your sense of enjoyment is not benumbed. You cannot even find an apple but it is sweet to taste. Simply to see a distant horizon through a clear air, the firm outline of a distant hill, or a blue mountain-top through some new vista, this is wealth enough for one afternoon. We journeyed to the foreign land of Sudbury, to see how the Sudbury men, the Hayneses and the Puffers and the Brighams, live; we traversed their pastures and their wood lots, and were home again at night.

Nov. 23, 1850. To-day it has been finger-cold. Unexpectedly I found ice by the side of the brooks this afternoon nearly an inch thick. The

difference in temperature of various localities is greater than is supposed. If I was surprised to find ice on the sides of the brooks, I was much more surprised to find a pond in the woods, containing an acre or more, quite frozen over, so that I walked across it. It was a cold corner where a pine wood excluded the sun. In the larger ponds and the river, of course there is no ice yet. This is a shallow, weedy pond. I lay down on the ice and looked through at the bottom. The plants appeared to grow more uprightly than on the dry land, being sustained and protected by the water. Caddis-worms were everywhere crawling about in their handsome quiver-like sheaths or cases.

I find it to be the height of wisdom not to endeavor to oversee myself, and live a life of prudence and common-sense, but to see over and above myself, entertain sublime conjectures, to make myself the thoroughfare of thrilling thoughts, live all that can be lived. The man who is dissatisfied with himself, what can he not do?

Nov. 23, 1852. This morning the ground is white with snow, and it still snows. This is the first time it has been fairly white this season, though once before, many weeks ago, it was slightly whitened for ten or fifteen minutes. Already the landscape impresses me with a

greater sense of fertility. There is something genial even in the first snow, and Nature seems to relent a little of her November harshness. Men, too, are disposed to give thanks for the bounties of the year all over the land, and the sound of the mortar is heard in all houses, and the odor of summer savory reaches even to poets' garrets. This, then, may be considered the end of the flower season for this year, though this snow will probably soon melt again. Among the flowers which may be put down as lasting thus far, as I remember, in the order of their hardiness, are yarrow, tansy, these very fresh and common, cerastium [mouse-ear chickweed], autumnal dandelion, dandelion, and perhaps tall buttercup, the last four scarce. The following seen within a fortnight: a late three-ribbed golden-rod, blue-stemmed golden-rod (these two perhaps within a week), *Potentilla argentea*, *Aster undulatus*, *Ranunculus repens*, *Bidens connata*, and Shepherd's purse. I have not looked for witch hazel nor *Stellaria media* [common chickweed] lately.

I had a thought in a dream last night, which surprised me by its strangeness, as if it were based on an experience in a previous state of existence, and could not be entertained by my waking self. Both the thought and the language were equally novel to me, but I at once discov-

ered it to be true, and to coincide with my experience in this state.

Nov. 23, 1853. 6 A. M. To Swamp Bridge Brook mouth. The cocks are the only birds I hear. But they are a host. They crow as freshly and bravely as ever, while poets go down stream, degenerate into science and prose.

By eight o'clock the misty clouds disperse, and it turns out a pleasant, calm, and spring-like morning. The water, going down, but still spread far over the meadows, is seen from the window perfectly smooth and full of reflections. What lifts and lightens and makes heaven of earth is the fact that you see the reflection of the humblest weed against the sky, but you cannot put your head low enough to see the substance so. The reflection enchants us, just as an echo does.

If I would preserve my relation to nature, I must make my life more moral, more pure and innocent. The problem is as precise and simple as a mathematical one. I must not live loosely, but more and more continently.

The Indian summer, said to be more remarkable in this country than elsewhere, no less than the reblossoming of certain flowers, the peep of the hylodes, and sometimes the faint warble of some birds, is the reminiscence or rather the return of spring, the year renewing its youth.

At 5 P. M. I saw flying southwest high overhead a flock of geese, and heard the faint honking of one or two. They are in the usual harrow form, twelve in the shorter line, and twenty-four in the longer, the latter abutting on the former at the fourth bird from the front. This is the sixth flock I have seen or heard of since the morning of the 17th, that is, within a week.

Nov. 23, 1860. Most of us are still related to our native fields as the navigator to undiscovered islands in the sea. We can any autumn discover a new fruit there which will surprise us by its beauty or sweetness. So long as I saw one or two kinds of berries in my walks whose names I did not know, the proportion of the unknown seemed indefinitely, if not infinitely, great. Famous fruits imported from the East or South and sold in our markets, as oranges, lemons, pineapples, and bananas, do not concern me so much as many an unnoticed wild berry, whose beauty annually lends a new charm to some wild walk, or which I have found to be palatable to an outdoor taste. The tropical fruits are for those who dwell within the tropics. Their fairest and sweetest parts cannot be exported nor imported. Brought here, they chiefly concern those whose walks are through the market-place. It is not those far-fetched fruits which the speculator imports, that concern us

chiefly, but rather those which you have fetched yourself from some far hill or swamp, journeying all the long afternoon, in the hold of a basket, consigned to your friends at home, the first of the season. As some beautiful or palatable fruit is perhaps the noblest gift of Nature to man, so is a fruit with which one has in some measure identified himself by cultivating or collecting it one of the most suitable presents to a friend. It was some compensation for Commodore Porter, who may have introduced some cannon-balls and bombshells into parts where they were not wanted, to have introduced the Valparaiso squash into the United States. I think that this eclipses his military glory.

Nov. 24, 1850. Plucked a buttercup to-day. I have certain friends whom I visit occasionally, but I commonly part from them early, with a certain bitter-sweet sentiment. That which we love is so mixed and entangled with that we hate in one another that we are more grieved and disappointed, aye, and estranged from one another, by meeting than by absence. Some men may be my acquaintances merely, but one whom I have been accustomed to idealize, to have dreams about as a friend, and mix up intimately with myself, can never degenerate into an acquaintance. I must know him on that higher ground, or not know him at all.

We do not confess and explain because we would fain be so intimately related as to understand each other without speech. Our friend must be broad. His must be an atmosphere coextensive with the universe, in which we can expand and breathe. For the most part, we are smothered and stifled by one another. I go to see my friend and try his atmosphere. If our atmospheres do not mingle, if we repel each other strongly, it is of no use to stay.

Nov. 24, 1851. Found on the south side of the [Ministerial] swamp the *Lygodium palmatum*, which Bigelow calls the only climbing fern in our latitude.

Nov. 24, 1857. Some poets have said that writing poetry was for youths only, but not so. In that fervid and excitable season we only get the impulse which is to carry us onward in our future career. Ideals are exhibited to us then distinctly which all our lives after we may aim at, but not attain. The mere vision is little compared with the steady, corresponding endeavor thitherward. It would be vain for us to be looking ever at promised lands toward which we were not meanwhile steadily and earnestly traveling, whether the way led over a mountain top or through a dusky valley. In youth, when we are most elastic, we merely receive an impulse in the proper direction. To suppose this is

equivalent to having traveled the road, or obeyed the impulse faithfully throughout a lifetime, is absurd. We are shown fair scenes in order that we may be tempted to inhabit them, and not simply tell what we have seen.

Nov. 24, 1858. It is a lichen day, with a little moist snow falling. The great green lungwort lichen shows now on the oaks (strange that there should be none on the pines close by), and the fresh, bright chestnut fruit of other kinds, glistening with moisture, brings life and immortality to light.

When I looked out this morning, the landscape presented a very pretty wintry sight, little snow as there was. Being very moist, it had lodged on every twig, and every one had its counterpart in a light, downy white one, twice or thrice its own depth, resting on it.

Here is an author who contrasts love for "the beauties of the person" with that for "excellences of the mind," as if these were the alternatives. I must say that it is for neither of these that I should feel the strongest affection. I love that one with whom I sympathize, be she "beautiful" or otherwise, of excellent mind or not.

Nov. 24, 1859. How pretty amid the downy and cottony fruits of November the head of the white anemone, raised a couple of feet from the ground on slender stalks, two or three together,

— small heads of yellowish-white down compact and regular as a thimble beneath, but, at this time, diffusive and bursting forth above, somewhat like a little torch with its flame.

Nov. 24, 1860. The first spitting of snow, a flurry or squall, from out a gray or slate-colored cloud that came up from the west. This consisted almost entirely of pellets an eighth of an inch or less in diameter. They drove along almost horizontally, or curving upward like the outline of a breaker before the strong and chilling wind. The plowed fields were for a short time whitened with them. The green moss about the bases of trees was very prettily spotted white with them, and also the large beds of cladonia in the pastures. They come to contrast with the red cockspur lichens on the stumps which you had not noticed before. Striking against the trunks of the trees on the west side, they fell and accumulated in a white line at the base. Though a slight touch, this was the first wintry scene of the season. The air was so filled with these snow pellets that we could not see a hill half a mile off, for an hour. The hands seek the warmth of the pockets, and fingers are so benumbed that you cannot open your jackknife. The rabbits in the swamp enjoy it as well as you. Methinks the winter gives them more liberty, like a night. I see where a boy

has set a box trap, and baited it with half an apple, and, a mile off, come across a snare set for a rabbit or partridge in a cowpath in a pitch-pine wood, near where the rabbits have nibbled the apples which strew the wet ground. How pitiable that the most many see of a rabbit should be the snare some boy has set for one!

The bitter-sweet of a white-oak acorn which you nibble in a bleak November walk over the tawny earth, is more to me than a slice of imported pineapple. We do not think much of table fruits. They are especially for aldermen and epicures. They do not feed the imagination. That would starve on them. These wild fruits, whether eaten or not, are a dessert for the imagination.

Nov. 25, 1850. This afternoon, late and cold as it is, has been a sort of Indian summer. Indeed, I think we have summer days from time to time the winter through, and that it is often the snow on the ground which makes the whole difference. This afternoon the air was indescribably clear and exhilarating, and though the thermometer would have shown it to be cold, I thought there was a finer and purer warmth than in summer, a wholesome, intellectual warmth in which the body was warmed by the mind's contentment, — the warmth hardly sensuous, but rather the satisfaction of existence.

The landscape looked singularly clean and pure and dry, the air like a pure glass being laid over the picture, the trees so tidy and stripped of their leaves; the meadow and pastures clothed with clean, dry grass, looked as if they had been swept; ice on the water and winter in the air, but yet not a particle of snow on the ground. The woods, divested in great part of their leaves, are being ventilated. It is the season of perfect works, of hard, tough, ripe twigs, not of tender buds and leaves. The leaves have made their wood, and a myriad new withes stand up all around, pointing to the sky, and able to survive the cold. It is only the perennial that you see, the iron age of the year.

I saw a muskrat come out of a hole in the ice. He is a man wilder than Ray or Melvin. While I am looking at him, I am thinking what he is thinking of me. He is a different sort of man, that is all. He would dive when I went nearer, then reappear again, and had kept open a place five or six feet square, so that it had not frozen, by swimming about in it. Then he would sit on the edge of the ice, and busy himself about something, I could not see whether it was a clam or not. What a cold-blooded fellow! thoughts at a low temperature, sitting perfectly still so long on ice covered with water, mumbling a cold, wet clam in its shell. What safe, low, moderate

thoughts he must have! He does not get upon stilts. The generation of muskrats do not fail. They are not preserved by the legislature of Massachusetts.

I experience such an interior comfort, far removed from the sense of cold, as if the thin atmosphere were rarefied by heat, were the medium of invisible flames, as if the whole landscape were one great hearthside, that where the shrub-oak leaves rustle on the hillside, I seem to hear a crackling fire and see the pure flames, and I wonder that the dry leaves do not blaze into yellow flames.

When I got up high on the side of the cliff, the sun was setting like an Indian summer sun. There was a purple tint in the horizon. It was warm on the face of the rocks, and I could have sat till the sun disappeared, to dream there. It was a mild sunset such as is to be attended to. Just as the sun shines on us warmly and serenely, our creator breathes on us and re-creates us.

Nov. 25, 1852. At Walden. I hear at sundown what I mistake for the squawking of a hen, for they are firing at chickens hereabouts, but it proved to be a flock of wild geese going south.

Nov. 25, 1853. Just after the sun set tonight, I observed the northern part of the

heavens was covered with fleecy clouds which abruptly terminated in a straight line stretching east and west directly over my head, the western end being beautifully rose-tinted. Half an hour later, this cloud had advanced southward, showing clear sky behind it in the north, until its southern edge was seen at an angle of 45° by me, but though its line was straight as before, it now appeared regularly curved like a segment of a melon rind, as usual.

Nov. 25, 1857. P. M. To Hubbard's Close, and thence through woods to Goose Pond and Pine Hill. A clear, cold, windy afternoon. The cat crackles with electricity when you stroke her, and the fur rises up to your touch. This is November of the hardest kind, bare frozen ground covered with pale brown or straw-colored herbage, a strong, cold, cutting north wind which makes me seek to cover my ears, a perfectly clear and cloudless sky. The cattle in the fields have a cold, shrunken, shaggy look, their hair standing out every way, as if with electricity, like the cat's. Ditches and pools are fast skimming over, and a few slate-colored snowbirds with thick, shuffling twitter, and fine-chipping tree sparrows flit from bush to bush in the otherwise deserted pastures. This month taxes a walker's resources more than any other. For my part, I should sooner think of going into

quarters in November than in winter. If you do feel any fire at this season out of doors, you may depend upon it, it is your own. It is but a short time these afternoons before the night cometh in which no man can walk. If you delay to start till three o'clock, there will be hardly time left for a long and rich adventure, to get fairly out of town. November Eat-heart, is that the name of it? Not only the fingers cease to do their office, but there is often a benumbing of the faculties generally. You can hardly screw up your courage to take a walk when all is thus tightly locked or frozen up, and so little is to be seen in field or wood. I am inclined to take to the swamps or woods as the warmest place, and the former are still the openest. Nature has herself become, like the few fruits she still affords, a very thick-shelled nut with a shrunken meat within. If I find anything to excite a warming thought abroad, it is an agreeable disappointment, for I am obliged to go willfully and against my inclination at first, the prospect looks so barren, so many springs are frozen up, not a flower, perchance, and few birds left, not a companion abroad in all these fields for me. I seem to anticipate a fruitless walk. I think to myself hesitatingly, shall I go there, or there, or there? and cannot make up my mind to any route, all seem so unpromising, mere surface-

walking and fronting the cold wind, so that I have to force myself to it often, and at random. But then I am often unexpectedly compensated, and the thinnest yellow light of November is more warming and exhilarating than any wine they tell of. The mite which November contributes becomes equal in value to the bounty of July. I may meet with something that interests me, and immediately it is as warm as in July, as if it were the south instead of the northwest wind that blew.

I do not know if I am singular when I say that I believe there is no man with whom I can associate, who will not, comparatively speaking, spoil my afternoon. That society or encounter may at last yield a fruit which I am not aware of, but I cannot help suspecting that I should have spent those hours more profitably alone.

I notice a thimble-berry vine forming an arch four feet high which has firmly rooted itself at the small end.

The roar of the wind in the trees over my head sounds as cold as the wind feels.

I shiver about awhile on Pine Hill, waiting for the sun to set. The air appears to me dusky now after four, these days. The landscape looks darker than at any other season, like arctic scenery. There is the sun a quarter of an hour high, shining on it through a per-

fectly clear sky, but to my eye it is singularly dark or dusky. And now the sun has disappeared, there is hardly less light for half a minute. I should not know when it was down, but by looking that way, as I stand at this height.

Returning I see a fox run across the road in the twilight. He is on a canter, but I see the whitish tip of his tail. I feel a certain respect for him, because, though so large, he still maintains himself free and wild in our midst, and is so original, so far as any resemblance to our race is concerned. Perhaps I like him better than his tame cousin, the dog, for it.

It is surprising how much, from the habit of regarding writing as an accomplishment, is wasted on form. A very little information or wit is mixed up with a great deal of conventionalism in the style of expressing it, as with a sort of preponderating paste or vehicle. Some life is not simply expressed, but a long-winded speech is made, with an occasional attempt to put a little life into it.

Nov. 25, 1858. While most keep close to their parlor fires this cold and blustering Thanksgiving afternoon, and think with compassion of those who are abroad, I find the sunny south side of the swamp as warm as their parlors, and warmer to my spirit. Aye, there is a serenity and warmth here, which the

parlor does not suggest, enhanced by the sound of the wind roaring on the northwest side of the swamp a dozen or so rods off. What a wholesome and inspiring warmth is this!

Pass Tarbell's. The farmer, now on the down-hill of life, at length gets his new barn and barn cellar built, far away in some unfrequented vale. This for twoscore years he has struggled for. This is his poem done at last, to get the means to dig that cavity and rear those timbers aloft. How many millions have done just like him, or failed to do it! There is so little originality, and just as little, and just as much fate, so to call it, in literature. With steady struggle, with alternate failure and success, he at length gets a barn cellar completed, and then a tomb. You would think there was a tariff on thinking and originality.

Nov. 25, 1860. Last night and to-day, very cold and blustering. Winter weather has come suddenly this year. The house was shaken by wind last night, and there was a general deficiency of bed-clothes. This morning some windows were as handsomely decorated with frost as ever in winter. I wear mittens or gloves, and my greatcoat. There is much ice on the meadows now, the broken edges shining in the sun. Now for the phenomena of winter. As I go up the meadow-side toward Clamshell I

see a very great collection of crows far and wide on the meadows, evidently gathered by this cold and blustering weather. Probably the moist meadows where they feed are frozen up against them. They flit before me in countless numbers, flying very low on account of the strong northwest wind that comes over the hill, and a cold gleam is reflected from the back and wings of each, as from a weather-stained shingle. Some perch within three or four rods of me, and seem weary. I see where they have been pecking the apples of the meadow-side, — an immense cohort of cawing crows which sudden winter has driven near to the habitations of man. When I return after sunset, I see them collecting, and hovering over and settling in the dense pine woods, as if about to roost there. . . .

How is any scientific discovery made? Why, the discoverer takes it into his head first. He must all but see it. . . .

How often you make a man richer in spirit, in proportion as you rob him of earthly luxuries and comforts.

Nov. 26, 1837. I look around for thoughts, when I am overflowing, myself. While I live on, thought is still in embryo, it stirs not within me. Anon it begins to assume shape and comeliness, and I deliver it, and clothe it in its garment of language. But, alas! how often when

thoughts choke me, do I resort to a spat on the back, or swallow a crust, or do anything but expectorate them.

Nov. 26, 1857. Minott's is a small, square, one-storied, unpainted house, with a hipped roof, and at least one dormer window, a third of the way up the south side of a long hill, which is some fifty feet high, and extends east and west. A traveler of taste may go straight through the village, without being detained a moment by any dwelling, either the form or surroundings being objectionable; but very few go by this house without being agreeably impressed, and therefore led to inquire who lives in it. Not that its form is so incomparable, nor even its weather-stained color, but chiefly, I think, because of its snug and picturesque position on the hillside, fairly lodged there where all children like to be, and its perfect harmony with its surroundings and position. For if, preserving this form and color, it should be transplanted to the meadow below, nobody would notice it, more than a schoolhouse which was lately of the same form. It is there because somebody was independent, bold enough to carry out the happy thought of placing it high on the hillside. It is the locality, not the architecture, that takes us captive. There is exactly such a site (only, of course, less open on either

side) between this house and the next westward, but few, if any, even of the admiring travelers, have thought of this as a house-lot, or would be bold enough to place a cottage there. Without side fences, or graveled walk, or flower-plots, that simple sloping bank before it is pleasanter than any front yard, though many a visitor, and many times the master, has slipped and fallen on the steep path. From its position and exposure, it has shelter and warmth and dryness and prospect. He overlooks the road, the meadow and brook, and houses beyond, to the distant woods. The spring comes earlier to that door-yard than any other, and summer lingers longest there.

Nov. 26, 1859. To the Colburn farm wood-lot. The chickadee is the bird of the wood, the most unfailing. When in a windy or in any day you have penetrated some thick wood like this, you are pretty sure to hear its cheery note. At this season, it is almost its sole inhabitant. I see to-day one brown creeper busily inspecting the pitch pines. It begins at the base, and creeps rapidly upward by starts, adhering close to the bark, and shifting a little from side to side often till near the top, then suddenly darts off downward to the base of another tree where it repeats the same course. This has no black cockade like the nuthatch.

Nov. 27, 1853. Now a man will eat his heart, if ever, now while the earth is bare, barren, and cheerless, and we have the coldness of winter without the variety of ice and snow. Methinks the variety and compensation are in the stars. How bright they are now in contrast with the dark earth!

Nov. 27, 1855. P. M. By river to J. Farmer's. He gave me the head of a gray rabbit which his boy had snared. This rabbit is white beneath the whole length, reddish brown on the sides, and the same spotted with black, above; the hairs coarse and homely, yet the fur beneath thick and slate-colored, as usual; well defended from the cold; sides, I might say, *pale*-brick color, the brown part. The fur under the feet dirty yellowish, as if stained by what it trod upon.

Farmer said that his grandfather, who could remember one hundred and twenty-five years before this, told him that they used to catch wolves in Carter's pasture by the North River, east of Dodge's Brook, in this manner: they piled up logs cob-house fashion, beginning with a large base, eight or ten feet square, and narrowing successively each tier, so as to make steps for the wolves to the top, say ten feet high. Then they put a dead sheep within. A wolf soon found it in the night, sat down outside, and

howled till he called his comrades to him, and then they ascended step by step, and jumped down within; but when they had done eating, they could not get out again. They always found one of the wolves dead, and supposed he was punished for betraying the others into this trap. A man in Brighton, whom he fully believes, told him that he built a bower near a dead horse, and placed himself within, to shoot crows. One crow took his station as sentinel on the top of a tree, and thirty or forty alighted upon the horse. He fired and killed seven or eight. But the rest, instead of minding him, immediately flew to their sentinel, and pecked him to pieces before his eyes. Also Mr. Joseph Clark told him that as he was going along the road, he cast a stick over the wall and hit some crows in a field, whereupon they flew directly at their sentinel on an apple-tree and beat and buffeted him away to the woods as far as he could see.

Nov. 27, 1857. Standing before Stacy's large glass windows, this morning, I saw that they were gloriously ground by the frost. I never saw such beautiful feather and fir like frosting. His windows are filled with fancy articles and toys for Christmas and New Year's presents, but this delicate and graceful outside frosting surpassed them all infinitely. I saw countless

feathers with very distinct midribs and fine pinnæ. The half of a trunk seemed to rise in each case up along the sash, and these feathers branched off from it all the way, sometimes nearly horizontally. Other crystals looked like fine plumes, of the natural size. If glass could be ground to look like this, how glorious it would be. You can tell which shopman has the hottest fire within, by the frost being melted off. I was never so struck by the gracefulness of the curves in vegetation, and wonder that Ruskin does not refer to frost work.

Nov. 27, 1859. The Greeks and Romans made much of honey, because they had no sugar; olive oil also was very important. Our poets (?) still sing of honey (though we have sugar) and oil, though we do not produce and scarcely use it.

Nov. 28, 1837. Every tree, fence, and spire of grass that could raise its head above the snow was this morning covered with a dense hoar frost. The trees looked like airy creatures of darkness caught napping. On this side, they were huddled together, their gray hairs streaming, in a secluded valley, which the sun had not yet penetrated, and on that they went hurrying off in Indian file by hedgerows and watercourses, while the shrubs and grasses, like elves and fairies of the night, sought to hide their

diminished heads in the snow. The branches and taller grasses were covered with a wonderful ice-foliage answering leaf for leaf to their summer dress. The centre, diverging, and even more minute fibres, were perfectly distinct, and the edges regularly indented. These leaves were on the side of the twig or stubble opposite to the sun (when it was not bent toward the east), meeting it, for the most part, at right angles, and there were others standing out at all possible angles upon this, and upon one another.

It struck me that these ghost leaves, and the green ones whose form they assume, were creatures of the same law. It could not be in obedience to two several laws, that the vegetable juices swelled gradually into the perfect leaf on the one hand, and the crystalline particles trooped to their standard in the same admirable order on the other.

The river viewed from the bank above appeared of a yellowish green color, but on a nearer approach, this phenomenon vanished, and yet the landscape was covered with snow.

Nov. 28, 1853. Settled with J. Munroe & Co., and on a new account placed twelve of my books with him on sale. I have paid him directly out of pocket, since the book was published, two hundred and ninety dollars, and taken

a receipt for it. This does not include postage, proof-sheets, etc. I have received from other quarters about fifteen dollars. This has been the pecuniary value of the book.

Dr. Harris described to me his finding a new species of cicindēla [glow-worm] at the White Mountains this fall, the same of which he had found a specimen there some time ago, supposed to be very rare, found at Peter's River and Lake Superior; but he proves it to be common near the White Mountains.

Nov. 28, 1857. Spoke to Skinner about that wild-cat which he says he heard a month ago in Ebby Hubbard's woods. He was going down to Walden in the evening (with a companion) to see if geese had not settled in it, when they heard this sound, which his companion, at first, thought made by a coon, but Skinner said it was a wild-cat. He says he has heard them often in the Adirondack region, where he has purchased furs. He told his companion he would hear it again soon, and he did, somewhat like the domestic cat, a low sort of growling, and then a sudden quick-repeated caterwaul, or *yow-yow-yow* or *yang-yang-yang*. He says they utter this from time to time when on the track of some prey.

Nov. 28, 1858. A gray, overcast, still day, and more small birds, tree sparrows and chicka-

dees, than usual about the house. There have been a very few fine snowflakes falling for many hours, and now, by 2 P. M., a regular snow-storm has commenced, fine flakes falling steadily, and rapidly whitening all the landscape. In half an hour the russet landscape is painted white, even to the horizon. Do we know of any other so silent and sudden a change?

I cannot now walk without leaving a track behind me. That is one peculiarity of winter walking. Anybody may follow my trail. I have walked, perhaps, a particular wild path along some swamp side all summer, and thought to myself, I am the only villager that ever comes here. But I go out shortly after the first snow has fallen, and lo, here is the track of a sportsman and his dog in my secluded path, and probably he preceded me in the summer as well. But my hour is not his, and I may never meet him.

Nov. 28, 1859. Saw Abel Brooks with a half-bushel basket on his arm. He was picking up chips on his and neighboring lots, had got about two quarts of old and blackened pine chips, and with these was returning home at dusk more than a mile, — such a petty quantity as you would hardly have gone to the end of your yard for, and yet he said he had got more than two cords of them at home, which he

had collected thus, and sometimes with a wheelbarrow. He had thus spent an hour or two, and walked two or three miles in a cool November evening, to pick up two quarts of pine chips scattered through the woods. He evidently takes real satisfaction in collecting his fuel, perhaps gets more heat of all kinds out of it than any man in town. He is not reduced to taking a walk for exercise, as some are. It is one thing to own a wood-lot as he does who perambulates its bounds almost daily, so as to have worn a path about it, and another to own one as many a person does, who hardly knows where it is. Evidently the quantity of chips in his basket is not essential. It is the chippy idea which he pursues. It is to him an unaccountably pleasing occupation, and no doubt he loves to see his pile grow at home. Think how variously men spend the same hour in the same village. The lawyer sits talking with his client after twilight, the trader is weighing sugar and salt, while Abel Brooks is hastening home from the woods with his basket half full of chips. I think I should prefer to be with Brooks. He was literally as smiling as a basket of chips.

Nov. 29, 1839. Many brave men have there been, thank fortune, but I shall never grow brave by comparison. When I remember myself, I shall forget them.

Cambridge, Nov. 29, 1841. One must fight his way after a fashion, even in the most civil and polite society. The most truly kind and generous have to be won by a sort of valor, for the seeds of suspicion as well as those of confidence lurk in every spadeful of earth. Officers of respectable institutions turn the cold shoulder to you, though they are known as genial and well-disposed persons. They cannot imagine you to be other than a rogue. It is that instinctive principle which makes the cat show her talons, when you take her by the paw. Certainly that valor which can open the hearts of men is superior to that which can only open the gates of cities. You must let people see that they serve themselves more than you.

Nov. 29, 1850. Still misty, drizzling weather without snow or ice. The pines standing in the ocean of mist seen from the Cliffs are trees in every stage of transition from the actual to the imaginary. The near are more distant, the distant more faint, till at last they are a mere shadowy cone in the distance. You can command only a circle of thirty or forty rods in diameter. As you advance, the trees gradually come out of the mist, and take form before your eyes. You are reminded of your dreams. Life looks like a dream. You are prepared to see visions.

Nov. 29, 1853. P. M. To J. P. Brown's Pond Hole. J. Hosmer showed me a pestle which his son had found this summer, while plowing on the plain between his house and the river. It has a rude bird's head, a hawk's or eagle's, the beak and eyes (the latter a mere prominence) serving for a knob or handle. It is affecting as a work of art by a people who have left so few traces of themselves, a step beyond the common arrow-head and pestle and axe, something more fanciful, a step beyond pure utility. As long as I find traces of works of convenience merely, however much skill they show, I am not so much affected as when I discover works which evince the exercise of fancy and taste, however rude. It is a great step to find a pestle whose handle is ornamented with a bird's-head knob. It brings the maker still nearer to the races which so ornament their umbrellas and cane handles. I have then evidence in stone that men lived here who had fancies to be pleased, and in whom the first steps toward a complete culture were taken. It implies so many more thoughts such as I have. The arrow-head, too, suggests a bird, but a relation to it not in the least godlike. But here an Indian has patiently sat, and fashioned a stone in a likeness of a bird, and added some pure beauty to that pure utility, and so far has begun to

leave behind him war and even hunting, — to redeem himself from the savage state. Enough of this would have saved him from extermination.

It has been cloudy and milder this afternoon, but now I begin to see in the western horizon a clear crescent of yellowish sky, and suddenly a glorious yellow sunlight falls on all the eastern landscape, russet fields and hillsides, evergreens and rustling oaks, and single leafless trees. In addition to the clearness of the air at this season, the light is all from one side, and none being absorbed or dissipated in the heavens, but it being reflected both from the russet earth and the clouds, it is intensely bright. All the limbs of a maple seen far eastward rising over a hill are wonderfully distinct and lit. I think we have some such sunsets as this, and peculiar to the season, every year. I should call it the russet afterglow of the year. It may not be warm, but must be clear and comparatively calm.

Nov. 29, 1857. P. M. To Assabet Bath, and down bank. Again I am struck by the singularly wholesome colors of the withered oak leaves, especially the shrub oak, so thick and firm and unworn, without speck, clear reddish-brown, sometimes paler or yellowish-brown, the whitish under sides contrasting with the upper in a very cheerful manner, as if the tree or shrub rejoiced

at the advent of winter. It exhibits the fashionable colors of the winter on the two sides of its leaves. It sets the fashions; colors good for bare ground or for snow, grateful to the eyes of rabbits and partridges. This is the extent of its gaudiness, red-brown and misty-white, and yet it is gay. The colors of the brightest flowers are not more agreeable to my eye. Then there is the rich dark brown of the black oak, large and somewhat curled leaf on sprouts, with its light, almost yellowish-brown under side. Then the salmonish hue of white-oak leaves, with the under sides less distinctly lighter. Many, however, have faded already.

Nov. 29, 1858. P. M. To Hill. About three inches of snow fell last night. How light and bright the day now; methinks it is as good as a half hour added to the day. White houses no longer stand out and stare in the landscape. The pine woods snowed up look more like the bare oak woods with their gray boughs. The river meadows show now far off a dull straw color or pale brown amid the general white, where the coarse sedge rises above the snow; and distant oak woods are now indistinctly reddish. It is a clear and pleasant winter day. The snow has taken all the November out of the sky. Now, blue shadows and green rivers (both which I see), and still winter life. I see par-

tridge and mice and fox tracks, and crows sit silent on a bare oak top.

Nov. 29, 1859. To Copan. Saw quite a flock of snow buntings, not yet very white. They rose from the midst of a stubble field unexpectedly. The moment they settled after wheeling around they were perfectly concealed, though quite near. I could only hear their rippling note from the earth from time to time.

Nov. 29, 1860. If a man has spent all his days about some business by which he has merely got to be rich, as it is called, has got much money, many houses and barns and woodlots, then his life has been a failure, I think. But if he has been trying to better his condition in a higher sense than this, has been trying to be somebody, that is, to invest himself, and get a patent for it, so that all may see his originality, though he should never get above board (and great inventors, you know, commonly die poor), I shall think him comparatively successful.

You would think that some men had been tempted to live in this world at all, only by the offer of a bounty by the general government, a bounty on living. I told such a man the other day that I had got a Canada lynx here in Concord, and his instant question was, "Have you got the reward for him?" "What reward?" "Why, the ten dollars which the State offers."

As long as I saw him, he neither said nor thought anything about the lynx, but only about the reward. You might have inferred that ten dollars was something rarer in his neighborhood than a lynx even, and that he was anxious to see it on that account. I had thought that a lynx was a bright-eyed, four-legged, furry beast, of the cat kind, very current indeed, though its natural gait is by leaps. But he knew it to be a draft drawn by the cashier of the Wild Cat Bank on the State Treasury, payable at sight. Then I reflected that the first currency was of leather, or a whole creature (whence *pecunia*, from *pecus*, a herd), and since leather was at first furry, I easily understood the connection between a lynx and ten dollars, and found that all money was traceable right back to the Wild Cat Bank. But the fact was that instead of receiving ten dollars for the lynx, I had paid away some dollars in order to get him, so you see, I was away back in a gray antiquity, behind the institution of money, further than history goes. Yet though money can buy no fine fruit whatever, and we are never made truly rich by the possession of it, the value of things is commonly estimated by the amount of money they will fetch. A thing is not valuable, for example, a fine situation for a house, until it is convertible into so much money, that is, can cease to be what

it is and become something else which you prefer. So you will see that all prosaic people who possess only the common sense, who believe chiefly in this kind of wealth, are speculators in fancy stocks, and continually cheat themselves; but poets and all discerning people who have an object in life, and know what they want, speculate in real values. The mean and low values of anything depend on its convertibility into something else, that is, have nothing to do with its intrinsic value. The world and our life have practically a similar value only to most. A man has his price at the South, is worth so many dollars, and so he has at the North. Many a man has set out by saying, I will make so many dollars by such a time, or before I die, and that is his price, as much as if he were knocked off for it by a Southern auctioneer.

Tuesday, *Nov.* 30, 1841. Cambridge. When looking over the dry and dusty volumes of the English poets, I cannot believe that those fresh and fair creations I had imagined are contained in them. English poetry, from Gower down, collected into an alcove, and so from the library window compared with the commonest nature, seems very mean. Poetry cannot breathe in the scholar's atmosphere. The Aubreys and Hickeses, with all their learning, profane it yet indirectly by their zeal. You need not envy

his feelings who for the first time had cornered up poetry in an alcove. I can hardly be serious with myself when I remember that I have come to Cambridge after poetry. I think if it would not be a shorter way to a complete volume to step at once into the field or wood, with a very low reverence to students and librarians. On running over the titles of these books, looking from time to time at their first pages or farther, I am oppressed by an inevitable sadness. One must have come into a library by an oriel window as softly and undisturbed as the light which falls on the books through the stained glass, and not by the librarian's door, else all his dreams will vanish. Can the Valhalla be warmed by steam and go by clock and bell?

Good poetry seems so simple and natural a thing that when we meet it, we wonder that all men are not always poets. Poetry is nothing but healthy speech. Though more than any other, the poet stands in the midst of nature, yet more than any other can he stand aloof from her. The best lines, perhaps, only suggest that this man simply saw or heard or felt what seems the commonest fact in my experience.

Nothing is so attractive and unceasingly curious as character. There is no plant that needs such tender treatment, there is none that will endure so rough. It is the violet and the oak.

It is divine and related to the heavens, as the earth is by the aurora. It has no acquaintance and no companion. It goes silent and unobserved longer than any planet in space, but when at length it does show itself, it seems like the flowering of all the world, and its before unseen orbit is lit up like the trail of a meteor. I hear no good news ever, but some trait of a noble character. It reproaches me plaintively. I am mean in contrast, but again am thrilled and elevated so that I can see my own meanness, and again still, that my own aspiration is realized in that other. You reach me, my friend, not by your kind or wise words uttered to me here or there; but as you retreat, perhaps after years of vain familiarity, some gesture or unconscious action in the distance speaks to me with more emphasis than all those years. I am not concerned to know what eighth planet is wandering in space up there, or when Venus or Orion rises, but if in any cot east or west, and set behind the woods, there is any planetary character illuminating the earth.

> Packed in my mind lie all the clothes
> Which outward nature wears,
> For, as its hourly fashions change,
> It all things else repairs.
>
> My eyes look inward, not without,
> And I but hear myself,

And that new wealth which I have got
Is part of my own pelf.

For while I look for change abroad,
I can no difference find,
Till some new ray of peace uncalled
Illumes my inmost mind.

As when the sun streams through the wood
Upon a winter's morn,
Where'er his silent beams may stray,
The murky night is gone.

How could the patient pine have known
The morning breeze would come,
Or simple flower anticipate
The insect's noonday hum,

Till that new light, with morning cheer,
From far streamed through the aisles,
And nimbly told the forest trees
For many stretching miles ?

Nov. 30, 1851. A rather cold and windy afternoon, with some snow, not yet melted, on the ground. Under the south side of a hill between Brown's and Tarbell's, in a warm nook, disturbed three large gray squirrels and some partridges, which had all sought out this bare and warm place. While the squirrels hid themselves in the treetops, I sat on an oak stump by an old cellar hole, and mused. This squirrel is always an unexpectedly large animal to see frisking about. My eye wanders across the valley to the pine woods which fringe the opposite

side, and finds in their aspect something which addresses itself to my nature. Methinks that in my mood I was asking nature to give me a sign. I do not know exactly what it was that attracted my eye. I experienced a transient gladness, at any rate, at something which I saw. I am sure that my eye rested with pleasure on the white pines now reflecting a silvery light, the infinite stories of their boughs, tier above tier, a sort of basaltic structure, a crumbling precipice of pine horizontally stratified. Each pine is like a great green feather stuck in the ground. A myriad white-pine boughs extend themselves horizontally, one above and behind another, each bearing its burden of silvery sunlight, with darker seams between them, as if it were a great crumbling piny precipice thus stratified. On this my eyes pastured while the squirrels were up the trees behind me. That, at any rate, it was that I got by my afternoon walk, a certain recognition from the pine, some congratulation. Where is my home? It is indistinct as an old cellar-hole now, a faint indentation merely in a farmer's field, which he has plowed into, rounding off its edges, years ago, and I sit by the old site on the stump of an oak which once grew there. Such is nature where we have lived. Thick birch groves stand here and there, dark brown (?) now, with white lines more or less distinct. The *Ly-*

godium palmatum [climbing fern] is quite abundant on that side of the swamp, twining round the golden-rods, etc.

Nov. 30, 1852. To Pine Hill. The buds of the *Populus tremuloides* show their down as in early spring, and the early willows. From Pine Hill, Wachusett is seen over Walden. The country seems to slope up from the west end of Walden to the mountain. Already a little after four o'clock, the sparkling windows and vanes of the village seen under and against the faintly purple-tinged, slate-colored mountains, remind me of a village in a mountainous country at twilight, where early lights appear. I think that this sparkle without redness, a cold glitter, is peculiar to this season.

Nov. 30, 1853. 8 A. M. To river to examine roots. I ascertain this morning that the white root with eyes, and slaty-tinged fibres, and sharp leaves rolled up, found gnawed off and floating about muskrat houses is the root of the great yellow lily. The leaf-stalk is yellow, while that of the white lily is a downy or mildewy blue-black. The yellow-lily root is then, it would seem, a principal item in the vegetable diet of the muskrat. I find that those large triangular or rhomboidal or shell-shaped eyes or shoulders on this root are the bases of leaf-stalks which have rotted off, but toward the upper end of the

root are still seen decaying. They are a sort of abutment on which the leaf-stalk rested. The fine black dots on them are the bases of the fine threads or fibres of the leaf-stalk, which in the still living leaf-stalk are distinguished by their purple color. These eyes, like the leaves, of course, are arranged spirally across the roots in parallel rows, in quincunx order, so that four make a diamond figure.

Nov. 30, 1855. This evening I received Cholmondeley's gift of Indian books, forty-four volumes in all, which came by the Canada.

On the twenty-seventh, when I made my last voyage for the season, I found a large round pine log about four feet long, floating, and brought it home. Off the larger end I sawed two wheels about a foot in diameter, and seven or eight inches thick, and I fitted to them an axletree made of a joist which I also found in the river. Thus I had a convenient pair of wheels on which to get my boat up and roll it about. I was pleased to get my boat in by this means rather than on a borrowed wheelbarrow. It was fit that the river should furnish the material, and that in my last voyage on it, when the ice reminded me that it was time to put it in winter quarters.

Nov. 30, 1856. Minott told me on Friday of an oldish man and woman who had brought to a

muster here once a great leg of bacon boiled, to turn a penny with. The skin, as thick as sole leather, was flayed and turned back, displaying the tempting flesh. A tall, raw-boned, omnivorous heron of a Yankee came along and bargained with the woman, who was awaiting a customer, for as much of that as he could eat. He ate and ate and ate, making a surprising hole, greatly to the amusement of the lookers-on, till the woman in her despair, unfaithful to her engagement, appealed to the police to drive him off.

Minott Pratt tells me that he watched the fringed gentian this year, and it lasted till the first week in November.

Nov. 30, 1857. A still, warm, cloudy, rain-threatening day. Surveying the J. Richardson lot. The air is full of geese. I saw five flocks within an hour, about 10 A. M., containing from thirty to fifty each, afterward two more flocks, making in all from two hundred and fifty to three hundred, at least, all flying southwest over Goose and Walden Ponds. You first hear a faint honking from one or two in the northeast, and think there are but few wandering there, but look up and see forty or fifty coming on, in a more or less broken harrow, wedging their way southwest. I suspect they honk more, at any rate they are more broken and alarmed, when

passing over a village, and are seen falling into their ranks again, assuming the perfect harrow form. Hearing only one or two honking, even for the seventh time, you think there are but few till you see them. According to my calculation, ten or fifteen hundred may have gone over Concord to-day. When they fly low and near, they look very black against the sky.

Nov. 30, 1858. P. M. To Walden with C., and Fair Haven Hill. It is a pleasant day, and the snow melting considerably. Though Walden is open, it is a perfect winter scene; this withdrawn, but ample recess in the woods, with all that is necessary for a human residence, yet never referred to by the London "Times" and Galignani's "Messenger," as some of those arctic bays are. Some are hastening to Europe, some to the West Indies, but here is a bay never steered for. These nameless bays, where the "Times" and the "Tribune" have no correspondent, are the true bays of All Saints for me. Green pines on this side, brown oaks on that, the blue sky overhead, and the white counterpane all around. It is an insignificant fraction of the globe which England and Russia and the filibusters have overrun. The open pond close by, though considerably rippled to-day, affects me as a peculiarly mild and genial object by contrast with this frozen pool, and I sit down on

the shore in the sun, on the bare rocks. There seems to be a milder air above it, as the water within it is milder. Going west through Wheeler's Owl wood toward Weird Dell, Well Meadow Field, I beheld a peculiar winter scene, seen many times before, but forgotten. The sun, rather low, is seen through the wood with a cold, dazzling, white lustre, like that of burnished tin, reflected from the silvery needles of the pine. No powerful light streams through, but you stand in the quiet and somewhat sombre aisles of a forest cathedral, where cold green masses alternate with pale-brown, but warm, leather-colored ones; you are inclined to call them red, reddish tawny, almost ruddy. These are the internal decorations, while dark trunks streaked with sunlight rise on all sides, and a pure white floor stretches around, and perhaps a single patch of yellow sunlight is seen on the white shaded floor.

Did ever clouds flit and change, form and dissolve so fast as in this clear cold air? for it is rapidly growing colder, and at such a time, with a clear air, wind, and shifting clouds, I never fail to see mother-o'-pearl tints abundant in the sky.

Coming over the side of Fair Haven Hill at sunset, we saw a long, large, dusky cloud in the northwest horizon, apparently just this side of

Wachusett, or at least twenty miles off, which was snowing, when all the rest was clear sky. It was a complete snow cloud. It looked like rain falling at an equal distance, except that the snow fell less directly, and the upper outline of a part of the cloud was more like that of a dusky mist. It was not much of a snowstorm, just enough to partially obscure the mountains about which it was falling, while the cloud was apparently high above them, or it may have been a little this side. The cloud was of a dun color, and at its south end, where the sun was just about to set, it was all aglow on its under side with a salmon fulgor, making it look warmer than a furnace, at the same time that it was snowing. It was a rare and strange sight, that of a snowstorm twenty miles off, on the verge of a perfectly clear sky. Thus local is all storm, surrounded by serenity and beauty. The terrestrial mountains were made ridiculous beneath that stupendous range. The sun seen setting through the snow-carpeted woods, with shimmering pine needles, or dark green spruces, and warm brown oak leaves for screens. With the advent of snow and ice, so much cold white, the browns are warmer to the eye. All the red that is in oak leaves and huckleberry twigs comes out.

I cannot but still see in my mind's eye those

little striped breams poised in Walden's glaucous water. They balance all the rest of the world in my estimation at present, for this is the bream I have just found, and, for the time being, I neglect all its brethren, and am ready to kill the fatted calf on its account. For more than two centuries have men fished here, and have not distinguished this permanent settler of the township. It is not like a new bird, a transient visitor that may not be seen again for years, but there it dwells and has dwelt permanently, who can tell how long? When my eyes first rested on Walden, the striped bream was poised in it, though I did not see it, and when Tahatawan paddled his canoe there. How wild it makes the pond and the township to find a new fish in it. America renews her youth here. But in my account of the bream, I cannot go a hair's breadth beyond the mere statement that it exists, the miracle of its existence. My contemporary and neighbor, yet so different from me! I can only poise my thought there by its side, and try to think *like* a bream for a moment. I can only think of precious jewels, of music, poetry, beauty, and the mystery of life. I only see the bream in its orbit, as I see a star, but I care not to measure its distance or weight. The bream appreciated floats in the pond, as the centre of the system, another image of God. Its life no

man can explain, more than he can his own. I want you to perceive the mystery of the bream. I have a contemporary in Walden. It has fins where I have legs and arms. I have a friend among the fishes, at least a new acquaintance. Its character will interest me, I trust, and not its clothes and anatomy. I do not want it to eat. Acquaintance with it is to make my life more rich and eventful. It is as if a poet or an anchorite had moved into the town, whom I can see from time to time, and think of yet oftener.

Though science may sometimes compare herself to a child picking up pebbles on the seashore, that is a rare mood with her. Ordinarily her practical belief is that it is only a few pebbles which are not known, weighed and measured. A new species of fish signifies hardly more than a new name. See what is contributed in the scientific reports. One counts the fin-rays, another measures the intestines, a third daguerreotypes a scale, etc.; as if all but this were done, and these were very rich and generous contributions to science. Her votaries may be seen wandering along the shore of the ocean of Truth, with their backs toward it, ready to seize on the shells which are cast up. You would say that the scientific bodies were terribly put to it for objects and subjects. A dead specimen of an animal, if it is only well preserved in alcohol, is

just as good for science as a living one preserved in its native element. What is the amount of my discovery to me? It is not that I have got one in a bottle, and that it has a name in a book, but that I have a little fishy friend in the pond. How was it when the youth first discovered fishes? Was it the number of their fin-rays or other arrangement, or the place of the fish in some system that made the boy dream of them? Is it these things that interest mankind in the fish, the inhabitant of the water? No, but a faint recognition of a living contemporary, a provoking mystery. One boy thinks of fishes, and goes a-fishing from the same motive that his brother searches the poets for rare lines. It is the poetry of fishes which is their chief use, their flesh is their lowest use. The beauty of the fish, that is what it is best worth while to measure. Its place in our systems is of comparatively little importance. Generally the boy loses some of his perception and his interest in the fish, and degenerates into a fisherman or an ichthyologist.

Nov. 30, 1859. I am one of a committee of four (Simon Brown, ex-Lieutenant-Governor, R. W. Emerson, myself, and John Keyes, late High Sheriff) instructed by a meeting of citizens to ask liberty from the selectmen to have the bell of the first parish tolled at the time

Captain Brown is being hanged, and while we shall be assembled in the Town House to express our sympathy with him. I applied to the selectmen yesterday. After various delays, they at length answer me to-night that they "are uncertain whether they have any control over the bell, but that, in any case, they will not give their consent to have the bell tolled." Beside their private objections, they are influenced by the remarks of a few individuals; —— said that he had heard "five hundred" damn me for it, and that he had no doubt, if it were done, some counter demonstration would be made, such as firing minute guns. A considerable part of Concord are in the condition of Virginia to-day, afraid of their own shadows.

It is quite warm to-day, and as I go home on the railroad causeway, I hear a hylodes peeping.

Dec. 1, 1850. I saw a little green hemisphere of moss which looked as if it covered a stone, but, thrusting my cane into it, I found it was nothing but moss about fifteen inches in diameter, and eight or nine inches high. When I broke it up, it appeared as if the annual growth was marked by successive layers half an inch deep, each. The lower ones were quite rotten, but the present year's quite green, the intermediate, white. I counted fifteen or eighteen. It was quite solid, and I saw that it con-

tinued solid as it grew by branching occasionally just enough to fill the newly gained space, and the tender extremities of each plant, crowded close together, made the firm and compact surface of the bed. There was a darker line separating the growths, where I thought the surface had been exposed to the winter. It was quite saturated with water, though firm and solid.

Dec. 1, 1852. To Cliffs. The snow keeps off unusually. The landscape is of the color of a russet apple, which has no golden cheek. The sunset sky supplies that. But, though it is crude to bite, it yields a pleasant acid flavor. The year looks back to summer, and a summer smile is reflected in her face. There is in these days a coolness in the air which makes me hesitate to call them Indian summer. At this season, I observe the form of the buds which are prepared for spring, the large bright yellow and reddish buds of the swamp pink, the already downy ones of the *Populus tremuloides* and the willows, the red ones of the blueberry, etc., also the catkins of the alders and birches.

Dec. 1, 1853. Those trees and shrubs which retain their withered leaves though the winter, shrub oaks, and young white, red, and black oaks, the lower branches of larger trees of the last mentioned species, hornbeams, young hickories, etc., seem to form an intermediate class

between deciduous and evergreen trees. They may almost be called the ever-reds. Their leaves, which are falling all winter long, serve as a shelter to rabbits and partridges, and other winter birds and quadrupeds. Even the chickadees love to skulk amid them, and peep out from behind them. I hear their faint, silvery, lisping notes, like tinkling glass, and occasionally a sprightly *day-day-day*, as they inquisitively hop nearer and nearer to me. They are a most honest and innocent little bird, drawing yet nearer to us as the winter advances, and deserve best of all of the walker.

Dec. 1, 1856. P. M. By path around Walden. With this little snow of the 29th ultimo there is yet pretty good sledding, for it lies solid. I see the pale-faced farmer out again on his sled for the five thousandth time. Cyrus Hubbard, a man of a certain New England probity and worth, immortal and natural, like a natural product, like the sweetness of a nut, like the toughness of hickory. He, too, is a redeemer for me. How superior actually to the faith he professes! He is not an office-seeker. What an institution, what a revelation is a man! We are wont foolishly to think that the creed a man professes is more significant than the fact he is. It matters not how hard the conditions seemed, how mean the world, for a

man is a prevalent force, and a new law himself. He is system whose law is to be observed. The old farmer condescends to countenance still this nature and order of things. It is a great encouragement that an honest man makes this world his abode. He rides on the sled drawn by oxen world-wise, yet comparatively so young, as if they had seen scores of winters. The farmer spoke to me, I can swear, clean, cold, moderate, as the snow. He does not melt the snow where he stands. Yet what a faint impression that encounter may make on me after all! Moderate, natural, true, as if he were made of earth, stone, wood, snow. I thus meet in this universe kindred of mine, composed of these elements. I see men like frogs. Their peeping I partially understand.

I go by Hayden's and take A. Wheeler's woodpath to railroad. Slate-colored snowbirds flit before me in the path, feeding on the seeds, the countless little brown seeds that begin to be scattered over the snow, so much the more obvious to bird and beast. A hundred kinds of indigenous grain are harvested now, broadcast upon the surface of the snow. Thus, at a critical season, these seeds are shaken down on to a clean, white napkin, unmixed with dirt and rubbish, and off this the little pensioners pick them. Their clean table is thus spread a few

inches or feet above the ground. Will wonder become extinct in me? Shall I become insensible as a fungus?

A ridge of earth, with the red cock's-comb lichen on it, peeps out still at the rut's edge.

The dear wholesome color of shrub-oak leaves, so clean and firm, not decaying, but which have put on a kind of immortality, not wrinkled and thin like the white-oak leaves, but full-veined and plump as nearer earth. Well-tanned leather on the one side, sun-tanned, color of colors, color of the cow and the deer, silver-downy beneath, turned toward the late bleached and russet fields. What are acanthus leaves, and the rest, to this? Emblem of my winter condition. I love and could embrace the shrub oak, with its scanty garment of leaves rising above the snow, lowly whispering to me, akin to winter thoughts, and sunsets, to all virtue; coverts which the hare and the partridge seek, and I too seek. What cousin of mine is the shrub oak? Rigid as iron, clean as the atmosphere, hardy as virtue, innocent and sweet as a maiden, is the shrub oak. In proportion as I know and love it, I am natural and sound as a partridge. I felt a positive yearning toward one bush this afternoon. There was a match found for me at last. I fell in love with a shrub oak. Tenacious of its leaves which shrivel not, but retain a cer-

tain wintry life in them, firm shields painted in fast colors, a rich brown. The deer-mouse, too, knows the shrub oak, and has its hole in the snow by the shrub oak's stem. Now, too, I remark in many places ridges and fields of fine russet or straw-colored grass rising above the snow, and beds of empty, straw-colored heads of everlasting, and ragged looking Roman wormwood. The blue curls' chalices stand empty, and waiting evidently to be filled with ice. I see great thimble-berry bushes rising above the snow, with still a rich, rank bloom on them, as in July, hypæthral mildew, elysian fungus! To see the bloom on the thimble-berry stem lasting into midwinter! What a salve that would make, collected and boxed.

No, I am a stranger in your towns. I am not at home at French's or Lovejoy's, or Savery's. I can winter more to my mind amid the shrub oaks. I have made arrangements to stay with them. The shrub oak, lowly, loving the earth, and spreading over it, tough, thick-leaved, leaves firm and sound in winter, rustling like leather shields, leaves fair and wholesome to the eye, clean and smooth to the touch. Tough to support the snow, not broken down by it, well-nigh useless to man, a sturdy phalanx, hard to break down, product of New England soil, bearing many striped acorns; well named *shrub oak*,

low, robust, hardy, indigenous, well-known to the striped squirrel and the partridge and the rabbit. The squirrels nibble its nuts, sitting upon an old stump of its larger cousin. What is Peruvian bark to your bark! How many rents I owe to you, how many eyes put out! How many bleeding fingers! How many shrub-oak patches I have been through, stooping, winding my way, bending the twigs aside, guiding myself by the sun, over hills and valleys and plains, resting in clear grassy spaces!

How can any man suffer long? for a sense of want is a prayer, and all prayers are answered.

Dec. 1, 1857. P. M. Walking in Ebby Hubbard's woods, I hear a red squirrel barking at me amid the pine and oak tops, and now I see him coursing from tree to tree. How securely he travels there fifty feet from the ground, leaping from the slender, bending twig of one tree across an interval of three or four feet, and catching at the nearest twig of the next, which so bends under him, that it is hard at first to get up. His traveling is a succession of leaps in the air at that height, without wings! And yet he gets along about as rapidly as on the ground.

I hear the faintest possible *quivet* from a nuthatch quite near me on a pine. I thus always *begin* to hear the bird on the approach of winter,

as if it did not breed, but merely wintered, here. [Added later.] Hear it all the fall, and occasionally through the summer of '59.

Dec. 2, 1839. A rare landscape immediately suggests a suitable inhabitant, whose breath shall be its wind, whose moods its seasons, and to whom it will always be fair. To be chafed and worried, and not as serene as nature, does not become one whose nature is as steadfast as she. We do all stand in the front ranks of the battle every moment of our lives. Where there is a brave man, there is the thickest of the fight, there the post of honor. Not he who procures a substitute to go to Florida is exempt from service. He gathers his laurels in another field. Waterloo is not the only battle-ground. As many and fatal guns are pointed at my breast now, as are contained in the English arsenals.

Dec. 2, 1852. The pleasantest day of all. Started in boat before 9 A. M., down river to Billerica with W. E. C. Not wind enough for a sail. I do not remember when I have taken a sail or a row on the river in December before. We had to break the ice about the boathouse for some distance. Still no snow. The banks are white with frost. The air is calm and the water smooth. The distant sounds of cars, cocks, hounds, etc., as we glide past N. Barrett's farm remind me of spring. It is an anticipation,

a looking through winter to spring. There is a certain resonance and elasticity in the air that makes the least sound melodious as in spring. The old unpainted houses under the trees look as if winter had come and gone. A side of one is painted as if with the pumpkin pies left over after Thanksgiving, it is so singular a yellow. The river has risen since the last rain a few feet, and partially floods the meadow. See still two ducks there. Hear the jay in distant copses, and the *Fringilla linaria* flies and mews over. Some parts of the meadow are covered with ice, through which we row, which yet lasts all day. The waves we make in the river nibble and crumble its edge, and produce a rustling of the grass and seeds, as if a muskrat were stirring. We land behind Tarbell's, and walk inland. How warm in the hollows! The outline of the hills is very agreeable there, ridgy hills with backs to them. A perfect cowpath winds along the side of one. These creatures have such weight to carry that they select the easiest course. Again embark. It is remarkably calm and warm in the sun, now that we have brought a hill between us and the wind. There goes a muskrat. He leaves so long a ripple behind that in this light you cannot tell where his body ends, and think him longer than he is. This is a glorious river-reach. At length we pass the bridge. Every-

where the muskrat houses line the shores, or what was the shore, some three feet high, and regularly sharp, as the Peak of Teneriffe. C. says, "Let us land; 'the angle of incidence should be equal to the angle of reflection.'" We did so. By the island where I formerly camped, half a mile or more above the bridge on the road from Chelmsford to Bedford, we saw a mink, slender, black at ten rods distance (Emmonds says they are a dark, glossy brown), very like a weasel in form. He alternately ran along the ice and swam in the water, now and then holding up his head and long neck, and looking at us, — not so shy as a muskrat; I should say very black. The muskrats would curl up into a ball on the ice, decidedly reddish brown. The ice made no show, being thin and dark. The mink's head is larger in proportion to the body than the muskrat's, not so sharp and rat-like. Left our boat just above the last-named bridge on west side. A bright, dazzling sheen for miles on the river as you look up it. Crossed the bridge, turned into a path on the left, and ascended a hill a mile and a half off, between us and Billerica, somewhat off from the river. The Concord affords the water prospects of a larger river, like the Connecticut even, hereabouts. I found a spear-head by a mysterious little building. On the west side of the river in Billerica

here is a grand range of hills, somewhat cliffy, covered with young oaks, whose leaves now give it a red appearance even when seen from Ball's Hill. It is one of the most interesting and novel features in the river scenery.

Men commonly talk as if genius were something proper to an individual. I esteem it but a common privilege, and if one does not enjoy it now, he may congratulate his neighbor that *he* does. There is no place for man-worship. We understand very well a man's relation, not to *his* genius, but to *the* genius.

Returning, the water is smoother and more beautiful than before. The ripples we make produce ribbed reflections or shadows on the dense but leafless bushes on shore, thirty or forty rods distant, very regular, and so far they seem motionless and permanent. All the water behind us, as we row, and even on the right and left at a distance, is perfectly unruffled, we move so fast, but before us down stream it is all in commotion from shore to shore. There are some fine shadows on those grand red oaken hills in the north. When a muskrat comes to the surface too near you, how quickly and with what force he turns and plunges again, making a sound in the calm water as if you had thrown into it a large stone with violence. Long did it take to sink the Carlisle bridge. The reflections

after sunset were distinct and glorious, the heaven into which we unceasingly rowed. I thought now that the angle of reflection was greater than the angle of inci*dents*. It grew cooler; the stars came out soon after we turned Ball's Hill, and it became difficult to distinguish our course. The boatman knows a river by reaches. Got home in the dark, our feet and legs numb and cold with sitting and inactivity, having been about eight miles by river, etc. It was some time before we recovered the full use of our cramped legs. I forgot to speak of the after-glows. The twilight in fact had several stages, and several times after it had grown dusky, acquired a new transparency, and the trees on the hillsides were lit up again.

Dec. 2, 1853. The skeleton, which at first sight produces only a shudder in all mortals, becomes at last, not only a pure, but a suggestive and pleasing object to science. The more we know of it, the less we associate it with any goblin of our imagination. The longer we keep it, the less likely it is that any such will come to claim it. We discover that the only spirit which haunts it is a universal Intelligence which has created it in harmony with all nature. Science never saw a ghost, nor does it look for any, but it sees everywhere the traces, and is itself the agent, of a Universal Intelligence.

Dec. 2, 1856. Saw Melvin's lank, bluish-white, black-spotted hound, and Melvin with his gun near by, going home at eve. He follows hunting, praise be to him, as regularly in our tame fields as the farmers follow farming; persistent genius, how I respect and thank him for it. I trust the Lord will provide us with another Melvin when he is gone. How good in him to follow his own bent, and not continue at the sabbath-school all his days! What a wealth he thus becomes to the neighborhood. Few know how to take the census. I thank my stars for Melvin, who is such a trial to his mother. He is agreeable to me as a tinge of russet on the hillside. I would fain give thanks morning and evening for my blessings. Awkward, gawky, loose-hung, dragging his legs after him, he is my contemporary and neighbor. He is of one tribe, I of another, and we are not at war.

How quickly men come on to the highways with their sleds, and improve the first snow. The farmer has begun to play with his sled as early as any of the boys. I see him already with mittens on and thick boots well-greased, and fur cap, and red comforter about his throat, though it is not yet cold, walking beside his team with contented thoughts. This drama every day in the streets! This is the theatre I go to. There he goes with his venture behind him, and often he gets aboard for a change.

Dec. 2, 1857. I find that according to the deed of Duncan Ingraham to John Richardson in 1797, my old beanfield at Walden Pond then belonged to George Minott. (C. Minott thinks he bought it of an Allen.) This was Deacon George Minott, who lived in the house next below the East Quarter schoolhouse, and was a brother of my grandfather-in-law. He was directly descended from Thomas Minott, who, according to Shattuck, was secretary of the abbot of Walden (!) in Essex, and whose son George was born at Saffron Walden (!) and was afterwards one of the early settlers of Dorchester.

Dec. 3, 1853. P. M. Up river by boat to Clamshell Hill. I see that muskrats have not only erected cabins, but since the river rose have in some places dug galleries a rod into the bank, pushing the sand behind them into the water. So they dig these now as places of retreat merely, or for the same purpose as the cabins apparently. One I explored this afternoon was formed in a low shore at a spot where there were weeds to make a cabin of, and was apparently never completed, perhaps because the shore was too low. Some of the clamshells, probably opened by the muskrats, and left lying on their half-sunken cabins where they are kept wet by the waves, show very handsome rainbow tints. . . . It is a somewhat saddening reflection that

the beautiful colors of this shell, for want of light, cannot be said to exist, until its inhabitant has fallen a prey to the spoiler, and it is thus left a wreck upon the strand. Its beauty then beams forth, and it remains a splendid cenotaph to its departed tenant, suggesting what glory he has gone to. Though fitted to be, it is not a gem "of purest ray serene," so long as it remains in "the dark, unfathomed caves of ocean," but only when it is tossed up to light. It is as if the occupant had not begun to live, until the light, with whatever violence, is let into its shell with these magical results. These shells beaming with the tints of the sky and the rainbow commingled, suggest what pure serenity has occupied them. There the clam dwells within a little pearly heaven of its own.

Look at the trees, bare or rustling with sere brown leaves, except the evergreens; the buds dormant at the foot of the leaf-stalks; look at the fields, russet and withered, and the various sedges and weeds with dry, bleached culms: such is our relation to nature at present, such plants are we. We have no more sap, nor verdure, nor color now. I remember how cheerful it has been formerly to sit round a fire outdoors amid the snow, and while I felt some cold, to feel some warmth also, and see the fire gradually increasing and prevailing over damp steaming and

dripping logs, and making a warm hearth for me. Even in winter we maintain a temperate cheer, a serene inward life, not destitute of warmth and melody.

Dec. 3, 1840. Music, in proportion as it is pure, is distant. The strains I now hear seem at an inconceivable distance, yet remotely within me. Remoteness throws all sound into my inmost being, and it becomes music, as the slumbrous sounds of the village, or the tinkling of the forge from across the water or the fields. To the senses, that is farthest from me which addresses the greatest depth within me.

Dec. 3, 1856. Mizzles and rains all day, making sloshy walking, which sends us all to the shoemaker's. Bought me a pair of cowhide boots to be prepared for winter walks. The shoemaker praised them, because they were made a year ago. I feel like an armed man now. The man who has bought his boots feels like him who has got in his winter's wood. There they stand beside me in the chamber, expectant, dreaming of far woods and wood paths, of frost-bound or sloshy roads, or of being bound with skate-straps and clogged with ice-dust.

For years my appetite was so strong that I browsed on the pine forest's edge seen against the winter horizon. How cheap my diet still!

Dry sand that has fallen in the railroad cuts, and slid on the snow beneath, is a condiment to my walk. I ranged about like a gray moose looking at the spiring tops of the trees, and fed my imagination on them, — far away, ideal trees, not disturbed by the axe of the wood-cutter. Where was the sap, the fruit, the value of the forest for me but in that line where it was relieved against the sky! That was my wood-lot; the silvery needles of the pine straining the light.

A man killed at the fatal Lincoln Bridge died in the village the other night. The only words he uttered while he lingered in his delirium were "All right," probably the last he uttered when he was struck. Brave, prophetic words to go out of the world with! Good as "I still live."

How I love the simple, reserved countrymen, my neighbors, who mind their own business and let me alone, who never waylaid nor shot at me, to my knowledge, when I crossed their fields, though each one has a gun in his house. For nearly twoscore years, I have known at a distance these long-suffering men, whom I never spoke to, who never spoke to me, and now I feel a certain tenderness for them, as if this long probation were but the prelude to an eternal friendship. What a long trial we have withstood, and how much more admirable we are to

each other, perchance, than if we had been bedfellows. I am not only grateful because Homer, and Christ, and Shakespeare have lived, but I am grateful for Minott, and Rice, and Melvin, and Goodwin, and Puffer even. I see Melvin all alone filling his sphere in russet suit, which no other would fill or suggest. He takes up as much room in nature as the most famous.

Six weeks ago I noticed the advent of chickadees, and their winter habits. As you walk along a woodside, a restless little flock of them, whose notes you hear at a distance, will seem to say, "Oh, there he goes, let 's pay our respects to him!" and they will flit after and close to you, and naïvely peck at the nearest twig to you, as if they were minding their own business all the while, without any reference to you.

Dec. 3, 1857. Surveying the Richardson lot which bounds on Walden Pond, I turned up a rock near the pond to make a bound with, and found under it and attached to it, a collection of black ants (say one fourth of an inch long), and an inch in diameter, collected around one monster black ant, as big as four or five at least, and a small parcel of yellowish eggs (?). The large ant had no wings, and was probably the queen. The ants were quite lively, though but little way under the rock. The eggs (?) adhered to the rock, when turned up.

Dec. 3, 1858. I improve every opportunity to go into a grist-mill, any excuse to see its cobweb tapestry. I put questions to the miller, as an excuse for staying, while my eye rests delighted on the cobwebs above his head, and perchance on his hat.

Dec. 3, 1859. Suddenly quite cold, and freezes in the house. Rode with a man this morning, who said that if he did not clean his teeth when he got up, it made him sick all the rest of the day, but he had found, by late experience, that when he had not cleaned his teeth for several days, they cleaned themselves. I assured him that such was the general rule, that when, from any cause, we were prevented from doing what we had commonly thought indispensable for us to do, things cleaned or took care of themselves.

—— was betrayed by his eyes, which had a glaring film over them, and no serene depth into which you could look. Inquired particularly the way to Emerson's, and the distance, and when I told him, said he knew it as well as if he saw it. Wished to turn and proceed to his house. Said, "I know I am insane," and I knew it too. He also called it "nervous excitement." At length when I made a certain remark, he said, "I don't know but you are Emerson; are you? you look somewhat like

him." He said as much, two or three times, and added once, "but then Emerson would not lie." Finally put his questions to me, of Fate, etc., as if I *were* Emerson. Getting to the woods, I remarked upon them, and he mentioned my name, but never to the end suspected who his companion was. Then proceeded to business, "since the time was short," and put to me the questions he was going to put to Emerson. His insanity exhibited itself chiefly by his incessant excited talk, scarcely allowing me to interrupt him, but once or twice apologizing for his behavior. What he said was for the most part connected and sensible enough.

When I hear of John Brown and his wife weeping at length, it is as if the rocks sweated.

Dec. 3, 1860. Talking with —— and —— to-day, they declared that John Brown did wrong. When I said that I thought he was right, they agreed in asserting that he did wrong because he threw his life away, and that no man had a right to undertake anything which he knew would cost him his life. I inquired if Christ did not foresee that he would be crucified, if he preached such doctrines as he did, but they both (though as if it were their only escape) asserted that they did not believe he did. Upon which a third party threw in, "You do not think he had as much foresight as Brown." Of

course, they as good as said that if Christ had foreseen that he would be crucified, he would have "backed out." Such are the principles and the logic of the mass of men.

It is to be remembered that by good deeds or words you encourage yourself, who always have need to witness or hear them.

Dec. 4, 1840. I seem to have experienced a joy sometimes like that with which yonder tree for so long has budded and blossomed, and reflected the green rays. The opposite shore of the pond, seen through the haze of a September afternoon, as it lies stretched out in gray content, answers to some streak in me.

Dec. 4, 1856. I notice that the swallow-holes in the bank behind Dennis's, which is partly washed away, are flat-elliptical, three times or more as wide horizontally as they are deep vertically, or about three inches by one.

Saw and heard cheep faintly one little tree sparrow, the neat, chestnut-crowned and winged, and white-barred bird, so clean and tough, made to withstand the winter. This color reminds one of the upper side of the shrub-oak leaf. The *Fringilla hiemalis* also. I love the few homely colors of Nature at this season, her strong, wholesome browns, her sober and primeval grays, her celestial blue, her vivacious green, her pure cold snowy white. Thus Nature

feeds her children cheaply with color. I have no doubt that it is an important relief to the eyes which have long rested on snow, to rest on brown oak leaves and the bark of trees. We want the greatest variety within the smallest compass, and yet without glaring diversity, and we have it in the colors of the withered oak leaves; the white, so curled, shriveled, and pale; the black (?), more flat and glossy, and darker brown; the red, much like the black, but, perhaps, less dark and less deeply cut. The scarlet still occasionally retains some blood in its veins.

Smooth white reaches of ice, as long as the river on each side, are threatening to bridge over its dark-blue artery, any night. They remind me of a trap set for it, which the frost will spring. Each day, at present, the wriggling river nibbles off the edges of the trap which have advanced in the night. It is a close contest between day and night.

Already you see the tracks of sleds leading by unusual routes, where will be seen no trace of them in summer, into far fields and woods, crowding aside and pressing down the snow, to where some heavy log or stone has thought itself secure, and the spreading tracks, also, of the heavy, slow-paced oxen, and the well-shod farmer who turns out his feet. Erelong, when

the cold is stronger, these tracks will lead the walker deep into remote swamps impassable in summer. All the earth is a highway then.

Sophia says that just before I came home, Min caught a mouse, and was playing with it in the yard. It had got away from her once or twice and she had caught it again, and now it was stealing off again, as she was complacently watching it with her paws tucked under her, when her friend, Riorden's stout cock, stepped up inquisitively, looked down at it with one eye, turning its head, then picked it up by the tail, gave it two or three whacks on the ground, and giving it a dexterous toss in the air, caught it in its open mouth, and it went, head foremost and alive, down its capacious throat in the twinkling of an eye, never again to be seen in this world; Min all the while, with paws comfortably tucked under her, looking on unconcerned. What matters it one mouse, more or less, to her? The cock walked off amid the currant-bushes, stretched his neck up and gulped once or twice, and the deed was accomplished. Then he crowed lustily in celebration of the exploit. It might be set down among the *Gesta gallorum*. There were several human witnesses. It is a question whether Min ever understood where that mouse went to. She sits composedly sentinel, with paws tucked under her, a good

part of her days at present, by some ridiculous little hole, the possible entry of a mouse.

He who abstains from visiting another for magnanimous reasons, enjoys better society alone.

My first botany, as I remember, was Bigelow's "Plants of Boston and Vicinity," which I began to use about twenty years ago, looking chiefly for the popular names, and the short references to the localities of plants, even without any regard to the plant. I also learned the names of many, but without using any system, and forgot them soon. I was not inclined to pluck flowers, but preferred to leave them where they were, and liked them best there. I was never in the least interested in plants in the house. But from time to time we look at nature with new eyes. About half a dozen years ago, I found myself again attending to plants with more method, looking out the name of each one, and remembering it. I began to bring them home in my hat, a straw one with a scaffold lining to it, which I called my botany box. I never used any other, and when some whom I visited were evidently surprised at its dilapidated look, as I deposited it on their front entry table, I assured them it was not so much my hat, as my botany box. I remember gazing with interest at the swamps about those days,

and wondering if I could ever attain to such familiarity with plants that I should know the species of every twig and leaf in them, should be acquainted with every plant (except grasses and cryptogamous ones), summer and winter, that I saw. Though I knew most of the flowers, and there were not in any particular swamp more than half a dozen shrubs that I did not know, yet these made it seem like a maze of a thousand strange species, and I even thought of commencing at one end, and looking it faithfully and laboriously through, till I knew it all. I little thought that in a year or two I should have attained to that knowledge without all that labor. Still, I never studied botany, and do not to-day, systematically, the most natural system is still so artificial. I wanted to know my neighbors, if possible, to get a little nearer to them. I soon found myself observing when plants first blossomed and leaved, and I followed it up early and late, far and near, several years in succession, running to different sides of the town and into neighboring towns, often between twenty and thirty miles in a day. I often visited a particular plant four or five miles distant half a dozen times within a fortnight, that I might know exactly when it opened, besides attending at the same time to a great many others in different

directions, and some of them equally distant. At the same time I had an eye for birds and whatever else might offer.

Dec. 4, 1859. Awake to winter, and snow two or three inches deep, the first of any consequence.

Dec. 5, 1853. P. M. Got my boat in. The river frozen over thinly in most places, and whitened with snow which was sprinkled on it this noon.

4 P. M. To Cliffs. Now for short days and early twilight, in which I hear the sound of wood-chopping. The sun goes down behind a low cloud, and the world is darkened. The partridge is budding on the apple-tree, and bursts away from the pathside. Before I got home, the whole atmosphere was suddenly filled with a mellow, yellowish light equally diffused, so that it seemed much lighter around me than immediately after the sun sank behind the horizon-cloud fifteen minutes before. Apparently not till the sun had sunk thus far, did I stand in the angle of reflection.

Dec. 5, 1856. P. M. As I walk along the side of the hill, a pair of nuthatches flit by toward a walnut tree, flying low in mid course, and then ascending to the tree. I hear one's faint *tut-tut* or *quah-quah* (no doubt heard a good way off by its mate, now flown to the next

tree), as it is ascending the trunk or branch of a walnut in a zigzag manner, wriggling along, prying into the crevices of the bark; and now it has found a savory morsel which it pauses to devour, then flits to a new bough. It is a chubby bird, white, slate-color, and black.

It is a perfectly cloudless and simple winter sky. A white moon half full in the pale or dull-blue heaven, and a whiteness like the reflection of the snow extending up from the horizon all around, a quarter of the way up to the zenith. I can imagine that I see it shooting up like an aurora now at 4 P. M. About the sun it is only whiter than elsewhere, or there is only the faintest possible tinge of yellow there.

My themes shall not be far-fetched. I will tell of homely, every-day phenomena and adventures. Friends, society! It seems to me that I have an abundance, there is so much that I rejoice in and sympathize with, and men, too, that I never speak to, but only know and think of. What you call bareness and poverty is to me simplicity. God could not be unkind to me, if he should try. I love the winter with its imprisonment and its cold, for it compels the prisoner to try new fields and resources. I love to have the river closed up for a season, and a pause put to my boating, to be obliged to get my boat in. I shall launch it again in the spring with

so much more pleasure. This is an advantage in point of abstinence and moderation compared with the seaside boating, where the boat ever lies on the shore. I love best to have each thing in its season only, and enjoy doing without it at all other times. It is the greatest of all advantages to enjoy no advantage at all. I find it invariably true, the poorer I am, the richer I am. What you consider my disadvantage, I consider my advantage; while you are pleased to get knowledge and culture, I am delighted to think I am getting rid of them. I have never got over my surprise that I should have been born into the most estimable place in all the world, and in the very nick of time, too.

Dec. 5, 1858. How singularly ornamented is that salamander. Its brightest side, its yellow belly, sprinkled with fine dark spots, is turned downwards. Its back is indeed ornamented with two rows of bright vermilion spots, but they can only be detected on the very closest inspection, and poor eyes fail to discover them even then, as I have found.

Dec. 6, 1854. To Providence to lecture. After lecturing twice this winter, I feel that I am in danger of cheapening myself by trying to become a successful lecturer, that is, to interest my audiences. I am disappointed to find that most that I am, and value myself for, is lost, or

worse than lost, on my audience. I fail to get even the attention of the mass. I should suit them better if I suited myself less. You cannot interest them except as you are like them, and sympathize with them. I would rather that my audience should come to me, than I go to them; that so they should be sifted; that is, I would rather write books than lectures. To read to a promiscuous audience, who are at your mercy, the fine thoughts you solaced yourself with, far away, is as violent as to fatten geese by cramming, and in this case they do not get fatter.

Dec. 6, 1856. 2 P. M. To Hubbard's Bridge and Holden Swamp, and up river on ice to Fair Haven pond crossing, just below pond; back on east side of river. Skating is fairly begun. I can walk through the spruce swamp now dry-shod amid the water andromeda and *Kalmia glauca*. How handsome every one of these leaves that are blown about over the snow crust, or lie neglected beneath, soon to turn to mould! Not merely a matted mass of fibres like a sheet of paper, but a perfect organism and system in itself, so that no mortal has ever yet discerned or explored its beauty. Over against this swamp, I take to the river-side where the ice will bear. White snow-ice it is, but pretty smooth. It is quite glare close to the shore, and wherever the water overflowed yesterday. Just this side of

Bittern Cliff, I see the very remarkable track of an otter, made undoubtedly December 3d, when the snow-ice was mere slosh. It had come up through a hole (now black ice) by the stem of a button-bush, and apparently pushed its way through the slosh, as through snow on land, leaving a track eight inches wide, more or less, with the now frozen snow shoved up two inches above the general level on each side. Where the ice was firmer were seen only the track of its feet. At Bittern Cliff I saw where these creatures had been playing, sliding or fishing, apparently to-day, on the snow-covered rocks, on which for a rod upwards and as much in width, the snow was trodden and worn quite smooth, as if twenty had trodden and slid there for several hours. Their droppings are a mass of fishes' scales and bones, loose, scaly, black masses. At this point, the black ice approached within three or four feet of the rock, and there was an open space just there a foot or two across, which appeared to have been kept open by them. I continued along on that side, and crossed on white ice just below the pond. The river was all tracked up with otters from Bittern Cliff upward. Sometimes one had trailed his tail edgewise, making a mark like the tail of a deer-mouse; sometimes they were moving fast, and there was an interval of five feet between the

tracks. I saw one place where there was a zigzag piece of black ice two rods long and a foot wide in the midst of the white, which I was surprised to find had been made by an otter pushing his way through the slosh. He had left fishes' scales, etc., at the end. These very conspicuous tracks generally commenced and terminated at some button-bush or willow where black ice now marked the hole of that date. It is surprising that our hunters know no more about them. When I speak of the otter to our oldest village doctor, who should be ex officio a naturalist, he is greatly surprised, not knowing that such an animal is found in these parts, and I have to remind him that the Pilgrims sent home many otter skins in the first vessels that returned, together with beaver, mink, and black-fox skins, 1,156 pounds of other skins in the years 1631–36, which brought fourteen or fifteen shillings a pound, also 12,530 pounds of beaver skins.[1] In many places the otters appeared to have gone floundering along in the sloshy ice and water.

On all sides in swamps and about their edges, and in the woods, the bare shrubs are sprinkled with buds more or less noticeable and pretty, their little gemmæ or gems their most vital and attractive parts now, almost all the greenness

[1] Vide Bradford's *History*.

and color left, greens and salads for the birds and rabbits. Our eyes go searching along the stem for what is most vivacious and characteristic, the concentrated summer gone into winter quarters. For we are hunters pursuing the summer on snow-shoes and skates all winter long, and there is really but one season in our hearts.

Dec. 7, 1838. Never do we live a quite free life, like Adam's, but are enveloped in an invisible network of speculations. Our progress is from one such speculation to another, and only at rare intervals do we perceive that it is no progress. Could we for a moment drop this by-play, and simply wonder without reference or inference!

Dec. 7, 1852. P. M. Perhaps the warmest day yet. True Indian summer. The walker perspires. The shepherd's-purse is in full bloom; the andromeda not turned red. Saw a pile of snow-fleas in a rut in the wood-path, six or seven inches long, and three quarters of an inch high; to the eye exactly like powder, as if a sportsman had spilled it from his flask, and when a stick was passed through the living and skipping mass, each side of the furrow preserved its edge, as in powder.

Dec. 7, 1856. Skate to Fair Haven pond. This is the first skating. It takes my feet a

few moments to get used to the skates. I see the track of one skater who has preceded me this morning. Now I go shaking over hobbly places, now shoot over a bridge of ice only a foot wide between the water and the shore at a bend. Now I suddenly see the trembling surface of water where I thought were black spots of ice only, around me. The river is rather low, so that I cannot keep to it above the Clamshell bend. I am confined to a very narrow edging of ice on the meadow, gliding with unexpected ease through withered sedge, but slipping sometimes on a twig, again taking the snow to reach the next ice, but this rests my feet; straddling the bare black willows, winding between the button-bushes, and following narrow threadings of ice amid the sedge, which bring me out to clear fields unexpectedly. Occasionally I am obliged to take a few strokes over black and thin-looking ice where the neighboring bank is springy, and am slow to acquire confidence in it, but returning, how bold I am! Now I glide over a field of white air-cells close to the surface, with covering no thicker than egg-shells, cutting through with a sharp crackling sound. There are many of those singular spider-shaped dark places amid the white ice, where the surface-water has run through some days ago. That grand old poem called Winter is round again

without any connivance of mine. As I sit under Lee's Cliff, where the snow is melted, amid sere pennyroyal and frostbitten catnip, I look over my shoulder upon an arctic scene, and see with surprise the pond, a dumb white surface of ice speckled with snow, just as so many winters before, where so lately were lapsing waves or smooth, reflecting water. I see the holes which the pickerel fisher has made, and I see him, too, retreating over the hills drawing his sled behind him. The water is already skimmed over again, and I hear the familiar belching voice of the pond. It seemed as if winter had come without any interval since midsummer, and I was prepared to see it flit away by the time I again looked over my shoulder. It was as if I had dreamed it. The winters come now as fast as snowflakes. It is wonderful that old men do not lose their reckoning. It was summer, and now again it is winter. Nature loves this rhyme so well that she never tires of repeating it. So sweet and wholesome is the winter, so simple and moderate, so satisfactory and perfect, that her children will never weary of it. What a poem, an epic in blank verse, enriched with a million tinkling rhymes! It is solid beauty. It has been subjected to the vicissitudes of millions of years of the gods, and not a superfluous ornament remains. The severest and coldest of the

immortal critics have shot their arrows at it, and pruned it, till it cannot be amended.

You will see full-grown woods where the oaks and pines and birches are separated by right lines, growing in squares or other rectilinear figures, because different lots were cut at different times.

Dec. 7, 1857. Running the long northwest side of Richardson's Fair Haven lot. It is a fine, sunny, and warm day *in the woods* for the season. We eat our dinner in the middle of the line, amid the young oaks in a sheltered and unfrequented place. I cut some leafy shrub oaks, and cast them down for a dry and springy seat. As I sit there amid the sweet fern, talking with my man, Briney, I observe that its recent shoots (which like many larger bushes and trees have a few leaves in a tuft still at the extremities) toward the sun are densely covered with a slight silvery down which looks like frost, so thick and white. Looking the other way, I see none of it, but the bare reddish twigs. Even this is a cheering and compensating discovery in my otherwise barren work. I get thus a few positive values answering to the bread and cheese which makes my dinner. I owe thus to my week's surveying a few such slight, but positive discoveries.

Dec. 8, 1838. Nothing in Nature is sneak-

ing or chap-fallen, as somewhat maltreated or slighted, but each is satisfied with its being, and so is as lavender and balm. If skunk-cabbage is offensive to the nostrils of men, still has it not drooped in consequence, but trustfully unfolded its leaf of two handsbreadth. What was it to Lord Byron whether England owned or disowned him, whether he smelled sour and was skunk-cabbage to the English nostril, or, violet-like, the pride of the land and ornament of every lady's boudoir. Let not the oyster grieve that he has lost the race; he has gained as an oyster.

Dec. 8, 1850. It snowed in the night of the 6th, and the ground is now covered; our first snow, two inches deep. I see no tracks now of cows or men or boys beyond the edge of the wood. Suddenly they are shut up. The remote pastures and hills beyond the woods are closed to cows and cowherds, aye, and to cowards. I am struck by this sudden solitude and remoteness which these places have acquired. The dear privacy and retirement and solitude which winter makes possible, carpeting the earth with snow, furnishing more than woolen feet to all walkers! From Fair Haven I see the hills and fields, aye and the icy woods in the Corner, gleam with the dear old wintry sheen. Those are not surely the cottages I have seen all

summer. They are some cottages which I have in my mind.

It is interesting to observe the manner in which the plants bear their snowy burden. The dry calyx-leaves, like an oblong cup, of the *Trichostema dichotomum* in the woodpath, have caught the rain or melting snow, and so this little butter-boat is filled with a frozen pure drop which stands up high above the sides of the cup, so many pearly drops covering the whole plant. The pennyroyal there also retains its fragrance under the ice and snow.

Dec. 8, 1852. One cannot burn or bury even his old shoes without a feeling of sadness and compassion, much more his own body, without a slight sense of guilt.

Dec. 8, 1853. 7 A. M. How can we spare to be abroad in the morning red, to see the forms of the eastern trees against the dun sky, and hear the cocks crow, when a thin low mist hangs over the ice and frost in meadows. I have come along the river-side in Merrick's pasture to collect for kindling the fat pine roots and knots which the spearers dropped last spring, and which the floods have washed up. Get a heaping bushel-basket full.

Dec. 8, 1854. P. M. Up river and meadow on ice to Hubbard's Bridge, and thence to Walden. Winter has come unnoticed by me, I

have been so busy writing. This is the life most lead in respect of nature. How different from my habitual one! It is hasty, coarse, and trivial, as if you were a spindle in a factory. The other is leisurely, fine, and glorious, like a flower. In the first case, you are merely getting your living. In the second, you live as you go along. You travel only on roads of the proper grade, without jar or running off the track, and sweep around the hills by beautiful curves.

Here is the river frozen over in many places. The skating is all hobbled like a coat of mail or thickly bossed shield, apparently sleet frozen in water. How black the water where the river is open, when I look from the light, by contrast with the surrounding white, the ice and snow! a black artery, here and there concealed under a pellicle of ice. Went over the fields on the crust, to Walden, over side of Bear Garden. Already foxes have left their tracks. How the crust shines afar, the sun now setting. There is a glorious clear sunset sky, soft and delicate and warm, even like a pigeon's neck. Why do the mountains never look so fair as from my native fields?

Dec. 8, 1855. This afternoon I go to the woods down the railroad, seeking the society of some flock of little birds, or some squirrel, but in vain. I only hear the faint lisp of probably a

tree sparrow. I go through empty halls, apparently unoccupied by bird or beast. Yet it is cheering to walk there, while the sun is reflected from far through the aisles with a silvery light from the needles of the pine. The contrast of light or sunshine and shade, though the latter is now so thin, is food enough for me. In a little busy flock of lisping birds, chickadees or lesser red-polls, even in a nuthatch or downy woodpecker, there would have been a sweet society for me. But I did not find it. Yet I had the sun penetrating into the deep hollows through the aisles of the wood, and the silvery sheen of its reflection from masses of white pine needles.

Jacob Farmer brought me the head of a mink to-night, and took tea here. He says he can call a male quail close to him by imitating the note of the female, which is only a faint whistle.

Dec. 8, 1856. 8° above zero. Probably the coldest day yet.

Bradford, in his history of the Plymouth Plantation, remembering the condition of the Pilgrims on their arrival in Cape Cod Bay the 11th of November, 1620, O. S., says (p. 79), "Which way so ever they turned their eyes (save upward to the heavens) they could have little solace or content in respect of any outward objects,

for, summer being done, all things stared upon them with a weather beaten face, and the whole country, full of woods and thickets, represented a wild and savage hue." Such was a New England November, in 1620, to Bradford's eyes, and such no doubt it would be to his eyes in the country still. It required no little courage to found a colony here at that season of the year. The earliest mention of anything like a glaze in New England that I remember is in the same History, p. 83, where Bradford describes the second expedition from Cape Cod Harbor in search of a settlement, the 6th of December, O. S.: "The weather was very cold, and it froze so hard as the spray of the sea lighting on their coats, they were as if they had been glazed." Bradford was one of the ten principal persons. That same night they reached the bottom of the Bay, and saw the Indians cutting up a blackfish. Nature has not changed one iota.

Dec. 8, 1857. S—— says he came to Concord twenty-four years ago, a poor boy, with a dollar and three cents in his pocket, and he spent the three cents for drink at Bigelow's tavern, and now he is worth "twenty hundred dollars clear." He remembers many who inherited wealth whom he could buy out to-day. I told him that he had done better than I, in a pecuniary respect, for I had only earned my

living. "Well," said he, "that 's all I 've done, and I don't know as I 've got much better clothes than you." I was particularly poorly clad then, in the woods; my hat, pants, boots, rubbers, and gloves would not have brought fourpence, and I told the Irishman that it was n't everybody could afford to have a fringe round his legs, as I had, my corduroys not preserving a selvage.

Dec. 8, 1859. How is it that what is actually present and transpiring is commonly perceived by the common sense and understanding only, is bare and bald, without halo, or the blue enamel of intervening air? But let it be past or to come, and it is at once idealized. The man dead is spiritualized, the fact remembered is idealized. It is ripe and with the bloom on it. It is not simply the understanding now, but the imagination that takes cognizance of it. The imagination requires a long range. It is the faculty of the poet to see present things as if in this sense past and future, as if distant or universally significant. We do not know poets, heroes, and saints for our contemporaries, but we locate them in some far off vale; the greater and better, the farther off we are accustomed to consider them. We believe in spirits, we believe in beauty, but not now and here. They have their abode in the remote past, or in the future.

Dec. 9, 1852. P. M. To A. Smith's hill. Those little ruby-crowned lesser red-polls still about. They suddenly flash away from this side to that, in flocks, with a tumultuous note, half gurgle, half rattle, like nuts shaken in a bag, or a bushel of nutshells, soon returning to the tree they had forsaken on some alarm. They are oftenest seen on the white birch, apparently feeding on its seeds, scattering the scales about.

A fresh dandelion. The chestnuts are about as plenty as ever, both in the fallen burrs and out of them. There are more this year than the squirrels can consume. I picked three pints this afternoon, and did not find one mouldy one among those which I picked from under the wet and mouldy leaves. They are plump and tender. I love to gather them, if only for the sense of the bountifulness of nature they give me. A few petals of the witch hazel still hold on. A man tells me he saw a violet to-day.

In the "Homes of American Authors," it is said of most that at one time they wrote for the "North American Review." It is one of my qualifications that I have not written an article for the "North American Review."

Dec. 9, 1856. P. M. Railroad to Lincoln bridge and back by road. From a little east of Wyman's I look over the pond westward. The sun is near setting, away beyond Fair Haven.

A bewitching stillness reigns through all the woodland, and over all the snow-clad landscape. Indeed, the winter day in the woods or fields has commonly the stillness of twilight. The pond is perfectly smooth and full of light. I hear only the strokes of a lingering woodchopper at a distance and the melodious hooting of an owl, which is as common and marked a sound as that of the axe or the locomotive whistle; yet where does the ubiquitous hooter sit? and who sees him? In whose wood-lot is he to be found? Few eyes have rested on him hooting, few on him silent on his perch even, yet cut away the woods never so much year after year, though the chopper has not seen him, and only a grove or two is left, still his aboriginal voice is heard indefinitely far and sweet, mingled oft in strange harmony with the newly invented din of trade, hooting from his invisible perch at his foes, the woodchoppers who are invading his domains. As the earth only a few inches beneath the surface is undisturbed and what it was anciently, so are heard still some primeval sounds in the air. Some of my townsmen I never see, and of a great proportion I do not hear the voices in a year, though they live within my horizon; but every week almost, I hear the loud voice of the hooting owl, though I do not see the bird more than once in ten years.

I perceive that more or other things are seen in the reflection than in the substance. As I look over the pond westward, I see in substance the now bare outline of Fair Haven Hill, a mile beyond; whereas in the reflection I see not this, only the tops of some pines which stand close to the shore, but are invisible against the dark hill beyond, and these are indefinitely prolonged into points of shadow.

The sun is set, and over the valley which looks like an outlet of Walden toward Fair Haven, I see a burnished bar of cloud stretched low and level, as if it were the bar over that passage-way to Elysium, the last column in the train of the sun. When I get as far as my bean-field, the reflected white in the winter horizon of the perfectly cloudless sky is being condensed at the horizon's edge, and its hue deepening into a dun golden, against which the tops of the trees, pines and elms, are seen with a beautiful distinctness, and a slight blush begins to suffuse the eastern horizon, and so the picture of the day is done, and set in a gilded frame. Such is a winter eve. Now for a merry fire, some old poet's pages, or else serene philosophy, or even a healthy book of travels, to last far into the night, eked out perhaps with the walnuts which we gathered in November.

The worker who would accomplish much these

short days, must shear a dusky slice off both ends of the night. The chopper must work as long as he can see, often returning home by moonlight, and set out for the woods again by candle-light.

The northwest wind meeting the current in an exposed place produces that hobbly ice which I described at Cardinal Shore day before yesterday. Such is the case in this place every year, and no doubt the same phenomenon occurred annually at this point in the river, a thousand years before America was discovered. This regularity and permanence make these phenomena more interesting to me.

Dec. 9, 1858. At New Bedford. See a song sparrow and a pigeon woodpecker. Dr. Bryant tells of the latter pecking holes in blinds, and also in his barn roof and sides in order to get into it, holes in the window sashes or casings, as if a nail had been driven into them.

Dec. 10, 1837. Not the carpenter alone carries his rule in his pocket. Space is quite subdued to us. The meanest peasant finds in a hair of his head, or the white crescent upon his nail, the unit of measure for the distance of the fixed stars. His middle finger measures how many *digits* into space. He extends a few times his thumb and finger, and the continent is *spanned.* He stretches out his arms, and the sea is fathomed.

Dec. 10, 1840. I discover a strange track in the snow, and learn that some migrating otter has made across from the river to the wood, by my yard and the smith's shop, in the silence of the night. I cannot but smile at my own wealth when I am thus reminded that every chink and cranny of nature is full to overflowing. Such an incident as this startles me with the assurance that the primeval nature is still working, and makes tracks in the snow. It is my own fault that he must thus skulk across my premises by night. Now I yearn toward him, and heaven to me consists in a complete communion with the otter nature. He travels a more wooded path by watercourses and hedgerows, I by the highways, but though his tracks are now crosswise to mine, our courses are not divergent, but we shall meet at last.

Mere innocence will tame any ferocity.

Dec. 10, 1853. Another still more glorious day, if possible. Indian summer, even. These are among the finest days in the year, on account of the wholesome bracing coolness and clearness. Paddled up Assabet. Passed in some places between shooting ice crystals extending from both sides of the stream. Upon the thinnest black ice crystals, just cemented, was the appearance of broad fern leaves or ostrich plumes, or flat fir-trees with branches bent down. The surface

was far from even, rather in sharp-edged plaits and folds. The form of the crystals was oftenest that of low flattish or three-sided pyramids. When the base was very broad, the apex was imperfect, with many irregular rosettes of small and perfect pyramids, the largest with bases two or three inches long. All this appeared to advantage only while the ice (one twelfth of an inch thick, perhaps), rested on the black water.

What I write about at home, I understand so well comparatively, and I write with such repose and freedom from exaggeration.

Dec. 10, 1854. P. M. To Nut Meadow. Weather warmer. Snow softened. Saw a large flock of snow-buntings (quite white against woods, at any rate), though it is quite warm. Snow-fleas in paths; first I have seen. Hear the small woodpecker's whistle; not much else, only crows and partridges and chickadees. How quickly the snow feels the warmer wind. The crust, which was so firm and rigid, is now suddenly softened, and there is much water in the road.

Dec. 10, 1856. A fine, clear, cold winter morning, with a small leaf-frost on trees, etc. The thermometer at 7.15 and 7.30 A. M., 3° +

It is remarkable how suggestive the slightest drawing is as a memento of things seen. For a few years past I have been accustomed to make

a rude sketch in my journal, of plants, ice, and various natural phenomena, and though the fullest accompanying description may fail to recall my experience, these rude outline drawings do not fail to carry me back to that time and scene. It is as if I saw the same thing again, and I may again attempt to describe it in words, if I choose.

Yesterday I walked under the murderous Lincoln bridge, where at least ten men have been swept dead from the cars within as many years. I looked to see if their heads had indented the bridge, if there were sturdy blows given as well as received, and if their brains lay about. The place looks as innocent as "a bank whereon the wild thyme grows." The bridge does its work in an artistic manner. We have another of exactly the same character in another part of the town, which has killed one, at least, to my knowledge. Surely the approaches to our town are well guarded. These are our modern dragons of Wantley. Buccaneers of the Fitchburg Railroad, they lie in wait at the narrow passes, and decimate the employees. The Company has signed a bond to give up one employee at this pass annually. The Vermont mother commits her son to their charge, and when she asks for him again, the directors say, "I am not your son's keeper; go look beneath the ribs

of the Lincoln bridge." It is a monster which would not have minded Perseus with his Medusa's head. If he could be held back only four feet from where he now crouches, all travelers might pass in safety, and laugh him to scorn. This would require but a little resolution in our legislature, but it is preferred to pay tribute still.

Dec. 11, 1840. A man who had failed to fulfill an engagement, and grossly disappointed me, came to me to-night with a countenance radiant with repentance, and so behaved that it seemed as if I was the defaulter and could not be satisfied till he would let me stand in that light. How long a course of strict integrity might have come short of such confidence and good will! The crack of his whip was before attractive enough, but such conciliatory words from that shaggy coat and coarse comforter I had not expected. I saw the meaning which lurked far behind eye, all the better for the dark, as we see some faint stars better when we do not look directly at them with the full light of the eye. A true contrition, when witnessed, will humble integrity itself.

Dec. 11, 1853. To Heywood's Pond and up brook. Almost a complete Indian-summer day, clear and warm. I am without greatcoat. Ch. says he saw larks yesterday, a painted tor-

toise the day before, under ice at White Pond, and a ground robin (?) last week. He conjectures, I am told, that the landscape looks fairer when we turn our heads upside down, because we behold it with nerves of the eye unused before. Perhaps this reason is worth more for suggestion than explanation. It occurs to me that the reflection of objects in still water is in a similar manner fairer than the substance, and yet we do not employ unused nerves to behold it. Is it not that we let much more light into our eyes (which in the usual position are shaded by the brows), in the first case, by turning them more to the sky, and in the case of the reflections, by having the sky placed under our feet? that is, in both cases we see terrestrial objects, with the sky or heavens for a background or field; accordingly they are not dark or terrene, but lit and elysian.

Dec. 11, 1854. P. M. To Bare Hill. We have now those early, still, clear winter sunsets over the snow. It is but mid-afternoon when I see the sun setting far through the woods, and there is that peculiar, clear, vitreous, greenish sky in the west, as it were, a molten gem. The day is short. It seems to be composed of two twilights merely. The morning and the evening twilight make the whole day. You must make haste to do the work of the day before it is dark.

I hear rarely a bird except the chickadee, or perchance a jay or a crow. A gray rabbit scuds away over the crust in the swamp on the edge of the Great Meadows beyond Peters's. A partridge goes off, and coming up, I see where she struck the snow with her wings, making five or six, as it were, finger-marks.

Dec. 11, 1855. P. M. To Holden Swamp, Conantum. For the first time I wear gloves, but I have not walked early this season. I see no birds, but hear, I think, one or two tree sparrows. No snow, scarcely any ice to be detected; it is only aggravated November. I thread the tangle of the spruce swamp, admiring the leaflets of the swamp pyrus which had put forth again, now frost-bitten, the great yellow buds of the swamp pink, the round red buds of the high blueberry, and the firm sharp red ones of the panicled andromeda. Slowly I worm my way amid the snarl, the thicket of black alder, blueberry, etc., see the forms, apparently of rabbits, at the foot of maples, and cat-birds' nests now exposed in the leafless thicket. Standing there, though in this bare November landscape, I am reminded of the incredible phenomenon of small birds in winter, that erelong, amid the cold, powdery snow, as it were a fruit of the season, will come twittering a flock of delicate, crimson-tinged birds, lesser red-polls, to sport

and feed on the seeds and buds just ripe for them on the sunny side of a wood, shaking down the powdery snow there in their cheerful social feeding, as if it were high midsummer to them. These crimson aerial creatures have wings which would bear them quickly to the regions of summer, but here is all the summer they want. What a rich contrast! tropical colors, crimson breasts, on cold white snow! Such etherealness, such delicacy in their forms, such ripeness in their colors, in this stern and barren season! It is as surprising as if you were to find a brilliant crimson flower which flourished amid snow. They greet the hunter and the chopper in their furs. Their maker gave them the last touch, and launched them forth the day of the Great Snow. He made this bitter imprisoning cold, before which man quails, but he made at the same time these warm and glowing creatures to twitter and be at home in it. He said not only, let there be linnets in winter, but linnets of rich plumage and pleasing twitter, bearing summer in their natures. The snow will be three feet deep, the ice will be two feet thick, and last night, perchance, the mercury sank to thirty degrees below zero. All the fountains of nature seem to be sealed up. The traveler is frozen on his way, but under the edge of yonder birch wood will be a little flock of crimson-breasted lesser

red-polls, feeding on the seeds of the birch, as if a flower were created to be now in bloom, a peach to be now first fully ripe on its stem. I am struck by the perfect confidence and success of Nature. There is no question about the existence of these delicate creatures, their adaptedness to their circumstances. There is added superfluous painting and adornment, a crystalline, jewel-like health and soundness, like the colors reflected from ice-crystals. When some rare northern bird, like the pine grossbeak, is seen thus far south, in the winter, he does not suggest poverty, but dazzles us with his beauty. There is in them a warmth that is akin to the warmth that melts the icicle. Here is no imperfection suggested. The winter with its snow and ice is not an evil to be corrected. It is as it was designed and made to be, for the artist has had leisure to add beauty to use. I had a vision thus prospectively, as I stood in the swamp, of these birds, my acquaintances, angels from the north. I saw this familiar, too familiar fact, at a different angle, and I was charmed and haunted by it. I had seen into paradisaic regions with their air and sky, and I was no longer wholly or merely a denizen of this vulgar earth. Yet I had hardly a foothold there. It is only necessary to behold thus the least fact or phenomenon, however familiar, from a point a hair's

breadth aside from our habitual path or routine, to be overcome, enchanted by its beauty and significance. Only what we have touched and worn is trivial, our scurf, repetition, tradition, conformity. To perceive freshly, with fresh senses, is to be inspired. Great winter itself looked like a precious gem reflecting rainbow colors from one angle. My body is all sentient. As I go here or there, I am tickled by this or that I come in contact with, as if I touched the wires of a battery. I can generally recall, have fresh in my mind, several scratches last received. These I continually recall to mind, reimpress and harp upon. The age of miracles is each moment thus returned; now it is wild apples, now river reflections, now a flock of lesser redpolls. In winter, too, resides immortal youth and perennial summer. Its head is not silvered, its cheek is not blanched, but has a ruby tinge in it. If any part of nature excites our pity, it is for ourselves we grieve, for *there* is eternal health and beauty. We get only transient and partial glimpses of the beauty of the world. Standing at the right angle, we are dazzled by the colors of the rainbow in colorless ice. From the right point of view, every storm and every drop in it is a rainbow. Beauty and music are not mere traits and exceptions; they are the rule and character. It is the exception that we

see and hear. Then I try to discover what it was in the vision that charmed and translated me. What if we could daguerreotype our thoughts and feelings! — for I am surprised and enchanted often by some quality which I cannot detect. I have seen an attribute of another world and condition of things. It is a wonderful fact that I should be affected, and thus deeply and powerfully, more than by aught else in all my experience, that this fruit should be borne in me, sprung from a seed finer than the spores of fungi floated from other atmospheres! finer than the dust caught in the sails of vessels a thousand miles from land! Here the invisible seeds settle, and spring, and bear flowers and fruits of immortal beauty.

Dec. 11, 1856. Minott tells me that his and his sister's wood-lot contains about ten acres, and has, with a very slight exception at one time, supplied all their fuel for thirty years, and he thinks would constantly continue to do so. They keep one fire all the time, and two some of the time, and burn about eight cords in a year. He knows his wood-lot, and what grows in it, as well as an ordinary farmer does his cornfield, for he has cut his own wood till within two or three years, knows the history of every stump on it, and the age of every sapling, knows how many beech-trees and black birches there are, as an

other knows his pear or cherry trees. It is more economical as well as more poetical to have a wood-lot, and cut and get your own wood from year to year than to buy it at your own door. Minott may say to his trees, "Submit to my axe; I cut your father on this very spot." How many sweet passages there must have been in his life there, chopping all alone in the short winter days! How many rabbits, partridges, foxes he saw! A rill runs through the lot where he quenched his thirst, and several times he has laid it bare. At last rheumatism has made him a prisoner, and he is compelled to let a stranger, a vandal it may be, go into his lot with an axe. It is fit that he should be buried there.

Dec. 12, 1837. There are times when thought elbows her way through the underwood of words to the clear blue beyond: —

> "O'er bog or steep, though strait, rough, dense, or rare,
> With head, hands, wings, or feet, pursues her way,
> And swims, or sinks, or wades, or creeps, or flies."

But let her don her cumbersome working-day garment, and each sparkling dewdrop will seem a "Slough of Despond."

When we speak of a peculiarity in a man or a nation, we think sometimes to describe a mere mathematical point. But in fact it pervades the whole, as a drop of wine in a glass of water tinges the whole glass. Some parts may be fur-

ther removed than others from the centre, but not a particle so remote as not to be shined on or shaded by it.

No part of man's nature is formed with a useless or sinister intent. In no respect can he be wholly bad, but the worst passions have their root in the best. So a spine is proved to be only an abortive branch "which, notwithstanding, even as a spine, bears leaves, and in *Euphorbia heptagona*, sometimes flowers and fruit."

Dec. 12, 1840. Society seems very natural and easy. Can I not walk among men as simply as in the woods? I am greeted everywhere with mild looks and words, and it seems as if the eaves were running, and I heard the sough of melting snow all around me.

The young pines springing up in the cornfields from year to year are to me a much more refreshing fact than the most abundant harvests. My last stronghold is the forest.

Dec. 12, 1851. In regard to my friends, I feel that I know and have communion with a finer and subtler part of themselves which does not put me off when they put me off, which is not cold to me when they are cold, not till I am cold. I hold by a deeper and stronger tie than absence can sunder.

Ah, dear nature, the mere remembrance, after

a short forgetfulness, of the pine woods! I come to it as a hungry man to a crust of bread.

I have been surveying for twenty or thirty days, living coarsely, even as respects my diet (for I find that will always alter to suit my employment), indeed leading a quite trivial life, and to-night, for the first time, made a fire in my chamber and endeavored to return to myself. I wished to ally myself to the powers that rule the universe. I wished to dive into some deep stream of thoughtful and devoted life which meanders through retired and fertile meadows far from towns. I wished to do again, or for once, things quite congenial to my highest, inmost, and most sacred nature, to lurk in crystalline thought like the trout under verdurous banks where stray mankind should only see my bubble come to the surface. I wished to live, ah, as far away as a man can think. I wished for leisure and quiet to let my life flow in its proper channels, with its proper currents, when I might not waste the days, might establish daily prayer and thanksgiving in my family, might do my own work, and not the work of Concord and Carlisle, which would yield me better than money. I bethought myself, while my fire was kindling, to open one of Emerson's books, which it happens that I rarely look at, to try what a chance sentence out of that could do for me,

thinking at the same time of a conversation I had with him the other night, I finding fault with him for the stress he had laid on some of Margaret Fuller's whims and superstitions, but he declaring gravely that she was one of those persons whose experience warranted her attaching importance to such things as the *Sortes Virgilianæ*, for instance, of which her numerous friends could give remarkable accounts. At any rate, I saw that he was disposed to regard such things more seriously than I. The first sentence which I opened upon in his book was this, "If, with a high trust, he can thus submit himself, he will find that ample returns are poured into his bosom, out of what seemed hours of obstruction and loss. Let him not grieve too much on account of unfit associates," etc.; "in a society of perfect sympathy, no word, no act, no record would be. He will learn that it is not much matter what he reads, what he does. Be a scholar, and he shall have the scholar's part of everything," etc. Most of this corresponded well enough with my mood, and this would be as good an instance of the *Sortes Virgilianæ* as most, to quote. But what makes this coincidence very little, if at all, remarkable to me, is the fact of the obviousness of the moral, so that I had perhaps thought the same thing myself twenty times during the day, and yet had not been contented

with that account of it, leaving me thus to be amused by the coincidence, rather than impressed as by an intimation out of the deeps.

How much forbearance, aye, sacrifice and loss, goes to every accomplishment! I am thinking by what long discipline and at what cost, a man learns to speak simply at last.

Nothing is so sure to make itself known as the truth, for what else waits to be known.

Dec. 12, 1852. Colder at last. Saw a violet on the C. Miles road where the bank had been burned in the fall. *Beomyces rosea*, also. Tansy still fresh yellow, by the lower bridge. From Cliffs, I see snow on the mountains. Last night's rain was then snow there. They now have a parti-colored look, like the skin of a pard, as if they were spread with a saddle-cloth for Boreas to ride. I hear of a cultivated rose blossoming in a garden in Cambridge within a day or two. The buds of the aspen are large, and show wool in the fall.

Dec. 12, 1856. Wonderful, wonderful is our life, and that of our companions! That there should be such a thing as a brute animal, not human! that it should attain to a sort of society with our race! Think of cats, for instance; they are neither Chinese nor Tartars, they neither go to school, nor read the Testament. Yet how near they come to doing so, how much they

are like us who do so. At length without having solved any of these problems, we fatten and kill and eat some of our cousins!

Where is the great natural historian? Is he a butcher? or the patron of butchers? As well look for a great anthropologist among cannibals or New Zealanders.

Dec. 12, 1858. Up river on ice to Fair Haven Hill. I see an immense flock of snow buntings, I think the largest I ever saw. There must be a thousand or two, at least. There is but three inches at most of crusted and dry frozen snow, and they are running amid the weeds that rise above it. They are very restless, and continually changing their ground. They will suddenly rise again a few seconds after they have alighted, as if alarmed, but after a short wheel, settle close by. As they fly from you in some positions, you see only or chiefly the black part of their bodies, and then as they wheel, the white comes into view, contrasted prettily with the former, and in all together at the same time. Seen flying higher against a cloudy sky, they look like snowflakes. When they rise all together, their note is like the rattling of nuts in a bag, as if a whole bin-full were rolled from side to side. They also utter from time to time, that is, individuals do, a clear rippling note, perhaps an alarm or call. It

is remarkable that their note, above described, should resemble the lesser red-polls'. Away goes the great wheeling, rambling flock, rolling through the air, and you cannot easily tell where they will settle. Suddenly the pioneers, or a part not foremost, will change their course, when in full career, and, when at length they know it, the rushing flock on the other side will be fetched about, as it were, with an undulating jerk, as in the boys' game of snap-the-whip, and those that occupy the place of the snapper are gradually off after their leaders on the new tack. Like a snowstorm, they come rushing down from the north. They are unusually abundant now. I should like to know where all these snowbirds will roost to-night, for they will probably roost together. What havoc an owl might make among them! So far as I observe, they confine themselves to the uplands, not alighting in the meadows. But Melvin tells me he saw a thousand feeding a long time in the Great Meadows, he thinks on the seeds of the wool grass, about the same time I saw those above described.

Dec. 13, 1851. Surveying to-day. We had one hour of almost Indian-summer weather in the middle of the day. I felt the influence of the sun. It softened my stoniness a little. The pines looked like old friends again. Cutting a

path through swamp where was much brittle dogwood, etc., I wanted to know the name of every bush. This varied employment to which my necessities compel me serves instead of foreign travel and the lapse of time. If it makes me forget some things which I ought to remember, it no doubt makes me forget many things which I ought to forget. By stepping aside from my chosen path so often, I see myself better, and am enabled to criticise myself better. It seems an age since I took walks and wrote in my journal, and when shall I revisit the glimpses of the moon? To be able to see ourselves, not merely as others see us, but as we are, that service a variety of absorbing employments does us.

I would not be rude to the fine intimations of the gods for fear of incurring the reproach of superstition.

Saw Perez Blood in his frock, — a stuttering, sure, unpretending man, who does not speak without thinking, does not guess. When I reflected how different he was from his neighbors, I saw that it was not so much outwardly, but that I saw an inner form. We do indeed see through and through each other, through the veil of the body, and see the real form and character, in spite of the garment. Any coarseness or tenderness is seen and felt under whatever garb.

How nakedly men appear to us, for the spiritual assists the natural eye.

Dec. 13, 1852. Walk early through the woods to Lincoln to survey. Winter weather may be said to have begun yesterday. Why have I ever omitted early rising and a morning walk? As we walked over the Cedar Hill, Mr. Weston asked me if I had ever noticed how the frost formed about a particular weed in the grass, and no other. It was a clear cold morning. We stooped to examine, and I observed about the base of the cistus the frost formed into little flattened trumpets or bells, an inch or more long, with the mouths down about the base of the stem. They were very conspicuous, dotting the grass white. But the most remarkable thing about it was that though there were plenty of other dead weeds and grasses about, no other species exhibited this phenomenon. I think it can hardly be because of the form of its top, and that therefore the moisture is collected and condensed, and flows down its stem. It may have something to do with the life of the root, which I noticed was putting forth shoots beneath. Perhaps the growth generates heat and so steam.

Dec. 13, 1855. Sanborn tells me that he was waked up a few nights ago in Boston about midnight by the sound of a flock of geese passing over the city, probably about the same night I

heard them here. They go honking over cities where the arts flourish, waking the inhabitants, over state-houses and capitols, where legislatures sit, over harbors where fleets lie at anchor, — mistaking the city, perhaps, for a swamp or the edge of a lake, about settling in it, not suspecting that it is preoccupied by greater geese than themselves.

Dec. 13, 1857. In sickness and barrenness, it is encouraging to believe that our life is dammed, and is coming to a head, so that there seems to be no loss, for what is lost in time is gained in power. All at once, unaccountably, as we are walking in the woods, or sitting in our chamber, after a worthless fortnight, we cease to feel mean and barren.

Dec. 13, 1859. My first true winter walk is perhaps that which I take on the river, or where I cannot go in the summer. It is the walk peculiar to winter, and now first I take it. I see that the fox has already taken the same walk before me, just along the edge of the button-bushes where not even he can go in the summer. We both turn our steps hither at the same time.

Now at 2.30 P. M., the melon-rind arrangement of the clouds, really parallel columns of fine mackerel sky reaching quite across the heavens from west to east, with clear intervals of blue sky ; and a fine-grained vapor like spun

glass extending in the same direction beneath the former. In half an hour, all the mackerel sky is gone.

What an ever-changing scene is the sky, its drifting cirrus and stratus! The spectators are not requested to take a recess of fifteen minutes while the scene changes, but, walking commonly with our faces to the earth, our thoughts revert to other objects, and as often as we look up, the scene has changed. Now I see it is a column of white vapor reaching quite across the sky from west to east, with locks of fine hair or tow that is carded, combed out on each side, surprising touches here and there which show a peculiar state of the atmosphere. No doubt the best weather signs are in these forms which the vapor takes. When I next look up the locks of hair are perfect fir-trees, with their recurved branches. These trees extend at right angles from the side of the main column. This appearance is changed all over the sky in one minute.

Again it is pieces of asbestos, or the vapor takes the curved form of the surf or breakers, and again, of flames.

But how long can a man be in a mood to watch the heavens? That melon-rind arrangement, so very common, is perhaps a confirmation of Wise the balloonist's statement that at a

certain height there is a current of air moving from west to east. Hence we so commonly see the clouds arranged in parallel divisions in that direction. What a spectacle the subtle vapors that have their habitation in the sky present these winter days! You have not only unvarying forms of a given type of cloud, but various types at different heights or hours. It is a scene, for variety, for beauty and grandeur, out of all proportion to the attention it gets. Who watched the forms of the clouds over this part of the earth a thousand years ago? who watches them to-day?

When I reach the causeway at the Cut, returning, the sun has just set, a perfect winter sunset, so fair and pure, with its golden and purple isles, I think the summer rarely equals it. There are real damask-colored isles or continents north of the sun's place, and further off northeast they pass into bluish purple. Hayden's house, one which I see there, seems the abode of the blessed. The eastern horizon also is purple. But that part of the parallel cloud columns overhead is now invisible. At length, the purple travels westward, as the sunk sinks lower below the horizon, the clouds overhead are brought out, and so the purple glow glides down the western sky.

Dec. 14, 1840. How may a man most cleanly

and gracefully depart out of nature? At present his birth and death are offensive and unclean things. Disease kills him and his carcass smells to heaven. It offends the bodily sense only so much as his life offended the moral sense. It is the odor of sin. His carcass invites sun and moisture, and makes haste to burst forth into new and disgusting forms of life with which it already teemed. It was no better than carrion before, but just animated enough to keep off the crows. The birds of prey which hover in the rear of an army are an intolerable satire on mankind, and may well make the soldier shudder. The mosquito sings our dirge, he is Charon come to ferry us over the Styx. He preaches a biting homily to us. He says, put away beef and pork, small beer and ale, and my trump shall die away, and be no more heard. The intemperate cannot go nigh to any wood or marsh, but he hears his requiem sung. Man lays down his body in the field, and thinks from it, as a stepping-stone, to vault at once into heaven, as if he could establish a better claim, when he had left such a witness behind him on the plain. Our true epitaphs are those which the sun and wind write upon the atmosphere around our graves so conclusively that the traveler does not draw near to read the lie on our tombstones. Shall we not

be judged rather by what we leave behind us, than by what we bring into the world? The guest is known by his leavings. When we have become intolerable to ourselves, shall we be tolerable to heaven? Will our spirits ascend pure and fragrant from our tainted carcasses? May we not suffer our impurities gradually to evaporate in sun and wind with the superfluous juices of the body, and so wither and dry up, at last, like a tree in the woods, which possesses a sort of embalmed life after death, and is as clean as the sapling or fresh buds of spring? Let us die by *dry* rot at least. The dead tree still stands erect without shame or offense amidst its green brethren, the most picturesque object in the wood. The painter puts it into the foreground of his picture, for in its death it is still remembered. When Nature finds man returned on her hands, he is not simply the pure elements she has contributed to his growth, but with her floods she must wash away, and with her fires burn up the filth that has accumulated, before she can receive her own again. He poisons her gales, and is a curse to the land that gave him birth. She is obliged to employ her scavengers in self-defense to abate the nuisance. May not man cast his shell with as little offense as the mussel, and it, perchance, be a precious relic to be kept in the cabinets of the

curious? May we not amuse ourselves with it, as when we count the layers of a shell, and apply it to our ear, to hear the history of its inhabitant in the swells of the sea, the pulsation of the life which once passed therein still faintly echoed? We confess that it was well done in Nature thus to let out her particles of lime to the mussel and coral, to receive them back again with such interest.

The ancients were more tidy than we, who subjected the body to the purification of fire before they returned it upon nature, for fire is the true washer; water only displaces the impurity. Fire is thorough, water is superficial.

Dec. 14, 1851. As for the weather, all seasons are pretty much alike to one who is actively at work in the woods. I should say that there were two or three remarkably warm days, and as many cold ones in the course of the year, but the rest are all alike in respect to temperature. This is my answer to my acquaintances, who ask if I have not found it very cold being out all day.

I hear the small woodpecker whistle as he flies toward the leafless wood on Fair Haven, doomed to be out this winter. The chickadees remind me of Hudson's Bay for some reason. I look on them as natives of a more northern latitude.

The now dry and empty, but clean-washed cups of the blue curls spot the half snow-covered grain-fields. Where lately was a delicate blue flower, now all the winter are held up these dry chalices. What mementos to stand above the snow!

Why not live out more yet, and have my friends and relatives altogether in nature? only my acquaintances among the villagers? That way diverges from this I follow, not at a sharp, but a very wide angle. Ah, nature is serene and immortal. Am I not one of the Zincali?

There are certain places where the ice will always be open, where, perchance, warmer springs come in. There are such places in every character, genial and open in the coldest seasons.

I come from contact with certain acquaintances, whom even I am disposed to look toward as possible friends. It oftenest happens that I come from them wounded. Only they can wound me seriously, and that perhaps without their knowing it.

Dec. 14, 1852. Ah, who can tell the serenity and clarity of a New England winter sunset? This could not be till the cold and the snow came. What isles those western clouds, in what a sea!

Dec. 14, 1854. P. M. With C. up north

bank of Assabet to Bridge. The river is open almost its whole length. It is a beautifully smooth mirror with an icy frame. It is well to improve such a time to walk by it. This strip of water of irregular width over the channel between broad fields of ice looks like a polished silver mirror, or like another surface of polished ice, and often is distinguished from the surrounding ice only by its reflections. I have rarely seen any reflections (of weeds, willows, and elms, and the houses of the village) so distinct, the stems so black and distinct, for they contrast not with a green meadow, but clear white ice, to say nothing of the silvery surface of the water. Your eye slides first over a plane surface of smooth ice of one color, to a watery surface of silvery smoothness, like a gem set in ice, and reflecting the weeds, trees, houses, and clouds with singular beauty. The reflections are particularly simple and distinct. These twigs are not referred to and confounded with a broad green meadow from which they spring, as in summer, but instead of that broad green ground absorbing the light, is the abrupt white field of ice.

Dec. 15, 1837. Jack Frost. As further confirmation of the fact that vegetation is a kind of crystallization, I observe that upon the edge of the melting frost on the windows, Jack is

playing singular freaks, now bundling together his needle-shaped leaves so as to resemble fields waving with grain, or shocks of wheat rising here and there from the stubble. On one side, the vegetation of the torrid zone is presented, high-towering palms, and wide-spread banyans, such as we see in pictures of oriental scenery. On the other, are arctic pines, stiff-frozen, with branches downcast, like the arms of tender men in frosty weather. In some instances, the panes are covered with little feathery flocks where the particles radiate from a common centre, the number of radii varying from three to seven or eight. The crystalline particles are partial to the creases and flaws in the glass, and when these extend from sash to sash, form complete hedgerows, or miniature watercourses, where dense masses of crystal foliage "high over-arched embower."

Dec. 15, 1838. Silence is ever less strange than noise, lurking amid the boughs of the hemlock or the pine, just in proportion as we find ourselves there. The nuthatch tapping the upright trunks by our side is only a partial spokesman for the solemn stillness.

Silence is the communion of a conscious soul with itself. If the soul attend for a moment to its own infinity, then and there is silence. She is audible to all men, at all times, in all places.

If we will, we may always hearken to her admonitions.

Dec. 15, 1840. When most at one with nature I feel supported and propped on all sides by a myriad influences, as trees in the plain or on the hillside are equally perpendicular. The most upright man is he that most entirely reclines (the prone recline but partially); by his entire reliance he is most erect. Men of little faith stand only by their feet, or recline on the ground, having lost their reliance on the soul. Nature is right, but man is straight. She erects no beams, she slants no rafters, and yet she builds stronger and truer than he. Everywhere she preaches not abstract, but practical truth. She is no beauty at her toilet, but her cheek is flushed with exercise.

Dec. 15, 1856. 3 P. M. To Walden. I observe B——'s boat left out at the pond, as last winter. When I see that a man neglects his boat thus, I do not wonder that he fails in his business. It is not only shiftlessness or unthrift, but a sort of filthiness to let things go to wrack and ruin thus.

I still recall that characteristic winter evening of December 9th. The cold, dry, and wholesome diet my mind and senses necessarily fed on, — oak leaves, bleached and withered weeds that rose above the snow, the now dark green of

the pines, and perchance the faint metallic chip of a single tree sparrow; the hushed stillness of the wood at sundown, aye, all the winter day, the short boreal twilight, the smooth serenity and the reflections of the pond, still alone free from ice; the melodious hooting of the owl, heard at the same time with the yet more distant whistle of a locomotive, more aboriginal, and perchance more enduring here than that, heard above all the voices of the wise men of Concord, as if they were not (how little he is Anglicized!), the last strokes of the woodchopper, who presently bends his steps homeward; the gilded bar of cloud across the apparent outlet of the pond, conducting my thoughts into the eternal west, the deepening horizon glow, and the hasty walk homeward to enjoy the long winter evening. The hooting of the owl; that is a sound which my red predecessors heard here more than a thousand years ago. It rings far and wide, occupying the space rightfully, — grand, primeval, aboriginal sound. There is no whisper in it of the Bulkeleys, the Flints, the Hosmers, who recently squatted here, nor of the first parish, nor of Concord Fight, nor of the last town-meeting.

Dec. 15, 1859. Philosophy is a Greek word, by good rights, and it stands almost for a Greek thing, yet some rumor of it has reached the commonest mind. M. Miles, who came to col-

lect his wood-bill to-day, said, when I objected to the small size of his wood, that it was necessary to split wood fine in order to cure it well; that he has found that more than four inches in diameter would not dry, and, moreover, a good deal depended on the manner in which it was corded up in the woods. He piled his high and tight. If this were not well done, the stakes would spread and the wood lie loosely, and so the rain and snow find their way into it, and he added, "I have handled a good deal of wood, and I think that I understand the *philosophy* of it."

Dec. 16, 1837. The woods were this morning covered with thin bars of vapor, the evaporation of the leaves, according to Sprengel, which seemed to have been suddenly stiffened by the cold. In some places it was spread out like gauze over the tops of the trees, forming extended lawns, where elves and fairies held high tournament: —

> "Before each van
> Prick forth the aery knights, and couch their spears,
> Till thickest legions close."

The east was glowing with a narrow, but ill-defined crescent of light, the blue of the zenith mingling in all possible proportions with the salmon color of the horizon. And now the neighboring hilltops telegraph to us poor crawl-

ers of the plain, the monarch's golden ensign in the east.

How indispensable to a correct study of Nature is a perception of her true meaning. The fact will one day flower out into a truth. The reason will mature and fructify what the understanding had cultivated.

Dec. 16, 1840. Speech is fractional, silence is integral.

Beauty is where it is perceived. When I see the sun shining on the woods across the pond, I think this side the richer which sees it.

The motion of quadrupeds is the most constrained and unnatural; it is angular and abrupt, except in those of the cat tribe, where undulation begins. That of birds and fishes is more graceful and independent. They move on a more inward pivot, the former by their weight or opposition to nature, the latter by their buoyancy or yielding to nature. Awkwardness is a resisting motion, gracefulness is a yielding motion. The line which would express the former is a tangent to the sphere, that which would express the latter a radius. But the subtlest, most ideal, and spiritual motion is undulation. It is produced by the most subtle element falling on the next subtlest. Rippling is a more graceful flight. If you consider it from the hilltop, you will detect in it

the wings of birds endlessly repeated. The two waving lines which express flight seem copied from the ripple. There is something analogous to this in our most inward experience. In enthusiasm we undulate to the divine spiritus, as the lake to the wind.

Dec. 16, 1850. I noticed [last Sunday or the 14th] a bush covered with cocoons which were artfully concealed by two leaves wrapped round them, one still hanging by its stem, so that they looked like a few withered leaves left dangling. The worm, having first incased itself in another leaf, for greater protection folded more loosely around itself one of the leaves of the plant, taking care, however, to incase the leaf-stalk and the twig with a thick and strong web of silk. So far from its depending on the strength of the stalk, which is now quite brittle, the strongest fingers cannot break it, and the cocoon can only be got off by slipping it up and off the twig. There they hang themselves secure for the winter, proof against cold and the birds, ready to become butterflies when new leaves push forth.

The snow everywhere was covered with snow-fleas, like pepper. When you hold a mass in your hand, they skip and are gone before you know it. They are so small that they go through and through the new snow. Sometimes,

when collected, they look like some powder which the hunter has spilled in the path.

Dec. 16, 1852. Observed the reflection of the snow on Pine Hill from Walden extending far beyond the true limits of a reflection quite across the pond. Also, less obviously, of pines. The sky overcast with thick scud, which in the reflection, the snow ran into.

Dec. 16, 1853. The elms covered with hoar frost seen in the east, against the morning light, are very beautiful. These days, when the earth is still bare and the weather is so warm as to create much vapor by day, are the best for these frost works.

Would you be well, see that you are attuned to each mood of nature.

Dec. 16, 1859. A. M. To Cambridge, where I read in Gerard's Herbal. His admirable though quaint descriptions are to my mind greatly superior to the modern more scientific ones. He describes not according to rule, but according to his natural delight in the plants. He brings them vividly before you, as one who has seen and delighted in them. It is almost as good as to see the plants themselves. It suggests that one cannot too often get rid of the assumption that is in our science. His leaves are leaves; his flowers, flowers; his fruit, fruit. They are colored and fragrant. It is a man's

knowledge added to a child's delight. Modern botanical descriptions approach ever nearer to the dryness of an algebraic formula, as $x+y=a$ love-letter. It is the keen joy and discrimination of a child who has just seen a flower for the first time, and comes running in with it to his friends. How much better to describe your object in fresh English words than in these conventional Latinisms! He has really seen, and smelled, and tasted, and reports his sensations.

Dec. 17, 1837. In all ages and nations we observe a leaning towards a right state of things. This may especially be seen in the life of the priest, which approaches most nearly to that of the ideal man. The druids paid no taxes, and "were allowed exemption from warfare and all other things." The clergy are even now a privileged class. In the last stage of civilization, poetry, religion, and philosophy will be one, and there are glimpses of this truth in the first.

Dec. 17, 1840. The practice of giving the feminine gender to all ideal excellences personified is a mark of refinement observable in the mythologies of even the most barbarous nations. Glory and victory even are of the feminine gender, but it takes manly qualities to gain them. Man is masculine, but his manliness (*virtus*) feminine. It is the inclination of brute force to moral power.

Dec. 17, 1850. I noticed, when the snow first came, that the days were very sensibly lengthened by the light reflected from the snow. Any work which required light could be pursued about half an hour longer, so we may well pray that the ground may not be laid bare by a thaw in these short winter days.

Dec. 17, 1851. The pitch-pine woods on the right of the Corner road. A piercing cold afternoon; wading in the snow. The pitch pines hold the snow well. It lies now in balls on their plumes, and in streaks on their branches, their low branches rising at a small angle and meeting each other. A sombre twilight comes through this roof of pine leaves and snow, yet in some places the sun streams in, producing the strongest contrasts of light and shade.

The winter morning is the time to see in perfection the woods and shrubs wearing their snowy and frosty dress. Even he who visits them half an hour after sunrise will have lost some of their most delicate and fleeting beauties. The trees wear their morning burden but coarsely after midday, and it no longer expresses the character of the tree. I observed that early in the morning every pine needle was covered with a frosty sheath, but soon after sunrise it was all gone. You walk in the pitch-pine woods as under a pent-house. The stems and branches of

the trees look black by contrast. You wander zigzag through the aisles of the wood, where stillness and twilight reign. I do not know but a pine wood is as substantial and as memorable a fact as a friend. I am more sure to come away from it cheered than from those who are nearest to being my friends.

Improve every opportunity to express yourself in writing, as if it were your last.

When they who have aspired to be friends cease to sympathize, it is the part of religion to keep asunder.

To explain to a friend is to suppose you are not intelligent of one another. If you are not, to what purpose will you explain?

One of the best men I know often offends me by uttering made words, the very best words, of course, most smooth and gracious and fluent, a dash of polite conversation, a graceful bending, as if I were Master Slingsby, of promising parts, from the university. Oh, would you but be simple and downright, would you but cease your palaver. The conversation of gentlemen after dinner, — no words are so tedious. Never a natural or simple word or yawn. It produces an appearance of phlegm and stupidity in me, the auditor. I am suddenly the closest and most phlegmatic of mortals, and the conversation comes to naught.

My acquaintances sometimes wonder why I will impoverish myself by living aloof from this or that company, but greater would be the impoverishment if I should associate with them.

Dec. 17, 1853. While surveying in Lincoln, to-day, saw a great many, may be a hundred, silvery brown cocoons of some great moth, wrinkled and flattish, on young alders in a meadow, three or four inches long, fastened to the main stem and branches at the same time, with dry alder and fragments of fern leaves attached to and partially concealing them.

Dec. 17, 1856. P. M. Cold, with a piercing northwest wind and bare ground still. It is pretty poor picking outdoors to-day. There 's but little comfort to be found. You go stumping over bare frozen ground, sometimes clothed with curly, yellowish, withered grass, like the back of half-starved cattle late in the fall, now beating this ear, now that, to keep them warm. It is comparatively summer-like on the south side of woods and hills.

When I returned from the south the other day, I was greeted by withered shrub-oak leaves which I had not seen there. It was the most homely and agreeable object that met me. I found that I had no such friend as the shrub oak hereabouts. A farmer once asked me what

they were made for, not knowing any use they served. But I can tell him that they do me good. They are my parish ministers, regularly settled. They never did any man harm that I know. Now you have the foliage of summer painted in brown. Go through the shrub oaks. All growth has ceased, no greenness meets the eye, except what there may be in the bark of this shrub. The green leaves are all turned to brown, quite dry and sapless, the little buds are sleeping at the base of the slender shrunken petioles. Who observed when they passed from green to brown? I do not remember the transition. But these leaves still have a kind of life in them. They are exceedingly beautiful in their withered state. If they hang on, it is like the perseverance of the saints. Their colors are as wholesome, their forms as perfect as ever. Now that the crowd and bustle of summer is passed, I have leisure to admire them. Their figures never weary my eye. Look at the few broad scallops in their sides. When was that pattern first cut? With what a free stroke the curve was struck! With how little, yet just enough, variety in their forms! Look at the fine bristles which arm each pointed lobe, as perfect now as when the wild bee hummed about them, or the chewink scratched beneath them. What pleasing and harmonious colors above and below!

The smooth, delicately brown-tanned upper surface, acorn-color, and the very pale, some silvery or ashy, ribbed under side. How poetically, how like saints, or innocent and beneficent beings, they give up the ghost! How spiritual! Though they have lost their sap, they have not given up the ghost. Rarely touched by worm or insect, they are as fair as ever.

Dec. 17, 1859. P. M. To Walden. I see on the pure white snow what looks like dust for half a dozen inches under a twig. Looking closely I find that the twig is hardhack, and the dust its slender, light-brown, chaffy-looking seed, which falls still in copious showers, dusting the snow, when I jar it, and here are the tracks of a sparrow which has jarred the twig, and picked the minute seeds a long time, making quite a hole in the snow. The seeds are so fine that it must have got more snow than seed at each pick. But they probably look large to its microscopic eyes. I see, when I jar it, that a meadow-sweet close by has quite similar, but larger seeds. This is the reason, then, that these plants rise so high above the snow, and retain their seed, dispersing it, on the least jar, over each successive layer of snow beneath them; or it is carried to distant places by the wind. What abundance and what variety in the diet of these small granivorous birds, while I find only a few

nuts still. These stiff weeds which no snow can break down, hold their provender. What the cereals are to men, these are to the sparrows. The only threshing they require is that the birds fly against their spikes or stalks. A little further I see the seed-box, *Ludwigia*, full of still smaller yellowish seeds. On the ridge, north, is the track of a partridge amid the shrubs. It has hopped up to the low clusters of smooth sumac berries, sprinkled the snow with them, and eaten all but a few. Also, here only, or where it has evidently jarred them down (whether intentionally or not, I am not sure), are the large oval seeds of the stiff-stalked lespedeza, which I suspect it ate with the sumac berries. There is much solid food in them. When the snow is deep, the birds can easily pick the latter out of the heads, as they stand on the snow.

Dec. 18, 1852. P. M. To Anursnack. Very cold, windy day. Loring's Pond beautifully frozen. (This the first skating.) So polished the surface, I took many parts of it for water. It was waved or watered with a slight dust, nevertheless. Cracked into large squares, like the faces of a reflector, it was so exquisitely polished that the sky and dun-colored scudding clouds, with mother-o'-pearl tints, were reflected in it as in the calmest water. I slid over it

with a little misgiving, mistaking the ice before me for water. Still the little ruby-crowned birds about.

Dec. 18, 1856. 12 M. Start for Amherst, N. H. A very cold day. Thermometer at eight A. M., −8°, and I hear of others very much lower at an earlier hour; −2° at 11.45. The last half the route from Groton Junction to Nashua is along the Nashua river mostly. This river looks less interesting than the Concord. It appears even more open, that is, less wooded (?). At any rate, the banks are more uniform, and I notice none of our meadows on it. At Nashua, hire a horse and sleigh, and ride to Amherst, eleven miles, against a strong northwest wind, this bitter cold afternoon. At my lecture, the audience attended closely, and I was satisfied. That is all I ask or expect generally. Not one spoke to me afterward, nor needed they. I have no doubt they liked it in the main, though none of them would have dared say so, provided they were conscious of it. Generally, if I can only get the ears of an audience, I do not care whether they say they like my lecture or not. I think I know as well as they can tell. At any rate, it is none of my business, and it would be im pertinent for me to inquire. The stupidity of most of these country towns, not to include the cities, is in their infantile innocence. Lectured

in basement (vestry) of the orthodox church, and, I trust, helped to undermine it. I was told to stop at the United States Hotel; an old inhabitant had never heard of it, but I found the letters on a sign without help. It was the ordinary, unpretending (?), desolate-looking country tavern. The landlord apologized to me because there was to be a ball there that night, which would keep me awake, and it did.

Dec. 18, 1859. Rain. It rains but little this afternoon, though there is no sign of fair weather. It is a lichen day. The pitch pines are very inspiriting to behold. Their green is as much enlivened and freshened as that of the lichens. It suggests a sort of sunlight on them, though not even a patch of clear sky is to be seen to-day. As dry and olive or slate-colored lichens are of a fresh and living green, so the already green pine needles have acquired a far livelier tint, as if they enjoyed this moisture as much as the lichens do. They seem to be lit up more than when the sun falls on them. Their trunks and those of trees generally, being wet, are very black, and the bright lichens on them are so much the more remarkable. Apples are thawed now, and are very good. Their juice is the best kind of bottled cider that I know. They are all good in this state, and your jaws are the cider press. The oak woods a quarter

of a mile off appear more uniformly red than ever. The withered leaves, being thoroughly saturated with moisture, are of a livelier color, and they are not only redder for being wet, but through the obscurity of the mist one leaf runs into another, and the whole mass makes one impression.

Dec. 19, 1837. Hell itself may be contained within the compass of a spark.

Dec. 19, 1840. This plain sheet of snow which covers the ice of the pond is not such a blankness as is unwritten, but such as is unread. All colors are in white. It is such simple diet to my senses as the grass and the sky. There is nothing fantastic in them. Their simple beauty has sufficed men from the earliest times. They have never criticised the blue sky and the green grass.

Dec. 19, 1850. The witch hazel is covered with fruit, and droops over gracefully, like a willow, the yellow foundation of its flowers still remaining.

Dec. 19, 1851. In all woods is heard now, far and near, the sound of the woodchopper's axe; a twilight sound now in the night of the year, as if men had stolen forth in the arctic night to get fuel to keep their fires a-going.

The sound of the axes far in the horizon is like the dropping of the eaves. Now the sun

sets suddenly without a cloud, and with scarcely any redness following, so pure is the atmosphere, only a faint rosy blush along the horizon.

Dec. 19, 1854. P. M. Skated half mile up Assabet, and then to foot of Fair Haven Hill. This is the first tolerable skating. I am surprised to find how rapidly and easily I get along, how soon I am at this brook, or that bend in the river, which it takes me so long to reach on the bank or by water. I can go more than double the usual distance before dark.

Near the island I saw a muskrat close by, swimming in an open reach. He was always headed up stream, a great proportion of the head out of water, and his whole length visible, though the root of the tail is about level with the water. It is surprising how dry he looks, as if that back was never immersed in the water. Off Clamshell, I heard and saw a large flock of *Fringilla linaria* over the meadow. Suddenly they turn aside in their flight, and dash across the river to a large, white birch, fifteen rods off, which plainly they had distinguished so far. I afterward saw many more in the Potter swamp up the river. They were commonly brown, or dusky above, streaked with yellowish white or ash, and more or less white or ash beneath. Most had a crimson crown or frontlet, and a few a crimson neck and breast, very handsome.

Some, with a bright crimson crown, had clean white breasts. I suspect that these were young males. They keep up an incessant twittering, varied from time to time with some mewing notes. Occasionally, for some unknown reason, they will all suddenly dash away with that universal loud note (twitter), like a bag of nuts. They are busily clustered in the tops of the birches, picking the seeds out of the catkins, and sustain themselves in all kinds of attitudes, sometimes head downwards, while about this. Common as they are now, and were winter before last, I saw none last winter.

Dec. 19, 1859. When a man is young, and his constitution and body have not acquired firmness, that is, before he has arrived at middle age, he is not an assured inhabitant of the earth, and his compensation is that he is not quite earthy. The greater uncertainty of his fate seems to ally him to a nobler race of beings, to whom he in part belongs, or with whom he is in communication. The young man is a demigod, he is but half here, he knows not the men of this world, the powers that be. They know him not. Prompted by the reminiscence of that other sphere from which he has so lately arrived, his actions are unintelligible to his seniors. He bathes in light. He is interesting as a stranger from another sphere. He really

thinks and talks about a larger sphere of existence than this world. It takes him forty years to accommodate himself to the carapax of this world. This is the age of poetry. Afterward he may be the president of a bank, and go the way of all flesh. But a man of settled views, whose thoughts are few and hardened like his bones, is truly mortal, and his only resource is to say his prayers.

Dec. 20, 1840. My home is as much of nature as my heart embraces. If I only warm my house, then is that only my home. But if I sympathize with the heats and colds, the sounds and silence of nature, and share the repose and equanimity that reign around me in the fields, then are they my house, as much as if the kettle sang and fagots crackled, and the clock ticked on the wall.

I rarely read a sentence which speaks to my muse as nature does. Through the sweetness of his verse, without regard to the sense, I have communion with Burns. His plaint escapes through the flexure of his verses. It was all the record it admitted.

Dec. 20, 1851. To Fair Haven Hill and plain below. Saw a large hawk circling over a pine wood below me, and screaming, apparently that he might discover his prey by their flight. Traveling ever by wider circles, what a symbol

of the thoughts; now soaring, now descending, taking larger and larger circles, or smaller and smaller. It flies not directly whither it is bound, but advances by circles, like a courtier of the skies. No such noble progress! How it comes round, as with a wider sweep of thought! But the majesty is in the imagination of the beholder, for the bird is intent on its prey. Circling and ever circling, you cannot divine which way it will incline, till perchance it drives down straight as an arrow to its mark. It rises higher above where I stand, and I see with beautiful distinctness its wings against the sky, primaries and secondaries, and the rich tracery of the outline of the latter (?), its inner wings or wing-linings, within the outer, like a great moth seen against the sky; a will-o'-the-wind, following its path through the vortices of the air; the poetry of motion, not as preferring one place to another, but enjoying each as long as possible, most gracefully thus surveying new scenes, and revisiting the old. How bravely he came round one of those parts of the wood which he had not surveyed, taking in a new segment, annexing new territories. Without "Heave yo," it trims its sail. It goes about without the creaking of a block. That America, yacht of the air, that never makes a tack, though it rounds the globe itself; takes in and shake out its reefs without

a flutter, its sky-scrapers all under its control; holds up one wing, as if to admire, and sweeps off this way, then holds up the other, and sweeps off that way. If there are two concentrically circling, it is such a regatta as Southampton waters never witnessed. Flights of imagination! Coleridgean thoughts! So a man is said to rise in his thought ever to fresh woods and pastures new.

Red, white, and green, and in the distance dark brown, are the colors of the winter landscape. I view it now from the cliffs. The red shrub oaks on the white ground of the plain beneath make a pretty scene. Most walkers are pretty effectually shut up by the snow.

It is no doubt a good lesson for the woodchopper, his long day in the woods, and he gets more than his half-dollar a cord.

Say the thing with which you labor. It is a waste of time for the writer to use his talents merely. Be faithful to your genius. Write in the strain that interests you most. Consult not the popular taste.

A clump of white pines seen far westward over the shrub-oak plain which is now lit up by the setting sun, a soft feathery grove, with their gray stems indistinctly seen, like human beings come to their cabin door, standing expectant on the edge of the plain, inspires me with a mild

humanity. The trees indeed have hearts. The sun seems to send its farewell ray far and level over the copses to them, and they silently receive it with gratitude, like a group of settlers with their children. The pines impress me as human. A slight vaporous cloud floats high over them, while in the west the sun goes down apace behind glowing pines and golden clouds which like mountains skirt the horizon. Nothing stands up more free from blame in this world than a pine-tree.

The dull and blundering behavior of clowns will as surely polish the writer at last, as the criticism of men of thought.

Our country is broad and rich, for here within twenty miles of Boston I can stand in a clearing in the woods, and look a mile or more over the shrub oaks to the distant pine copses and horizon of uncut woods, without a house or road or cultivated field in sight.

Go out before sunrise, or stay out till sunset.

It is wonderful, wonderful, the unceasing demand that Christendom makes on you, that you speak *from a moral point of view*. Though you be a babe, the cry is, repent, repent. The Christian world will not admit that a man has a just perception of any truth unless at the same time he cries, "Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner."

What made the hawk mount? Did he not fill himself with air? Before you were aware of it, he had mounted by his spiral path into the heavens.

Dec. 20, 1854. 7 A. M. To Hill. Said to be the coldest morning as yet. The river appears to be frozen everywhere. Where was water last night, is a firm bridge of ice this morning. The snow which has blown upon the ice has taken the form of regular star-shaped crystals an inch in diameter. Sometimes these are arranged in the form of a spear three feet long, quite straight. I see the mother-o'-pearl tints now at sunrise on the clouds high over the eastern horizon, before the sun has risen above the low bank in the east. The sky in the eastern horizon has that same greenish, vitreous, gem-like appearance which it has at sundown, as if it were of perfectly clear glass, with the green tint of a large mass of glass. Here are some crows already seeking their breakfast in the orchard, and I hear a red squirrel's reproof. The wood-choppers are hastening to their work afar off, walking fast to keep warm, before the sun has risen, their ears and hands well covered, the dry cold snow squeaking under their feet. They will be warmer after they have been at work an hour. P. M. Skated to Fair Haven with C. C's skates are not the best, and beside, he is

far from an easy skater, so that, as he said, it was killing work for him. Time and again the perspiration actually dropped from his forehead upon the ice, and it froze in long icicles on his beard. Yet he kept up his spirits and his fun. It has been a glorious winter day; its elements so simple, the sharp, clear air, the white snow everywhere covering the earth, and the polished ice. Cold as it is, the sun seems warmer on my back even than in summer, as if its rays met with less obstruction. And then the air is so beautifully still, not an insect in it, hardly a leaf to rustle. If there is a grub out, you are sure to detect it on the snow or ice. The shadows of the Clamshell hills are beautifully blue, as I look back half a mile at them, and in some places where the sun falls on it, the snow has a pinkish tinge.

WINTER

From the Journal of
HENRY D. THOREAU

Edited by
H. G. O. BLAKE

WINTER.

December 21, 1851. My difficulties with my friends are such as no frankness will settle. There is no precept in the New Testament that will assist me. . . . Others can confess and explain, I cannot. It is not that I am too proud. But explanation is not what is wanted. Friendship is the unspeakable joy and blessing that result to two or more individuals who from constitution sympathize. Such natures are liable to no mistakes, but will know each other through thick and thin. Between two by nature alike and fitted to sympathize there is no veil, and there can be no obstacle. Who are the estranged? Two friends explaining.

I feel sometimes as if I could say to my friends, "My friends, I am aware how I have outraged you, how I have seemingly preferred hate to love, seemingly treated others kindly and you unkindly, sedulously concealed my love, and sooner or later expressed all and more than all my hate." I can imagine how I might utter

something like this, in some moment never to be realized, but, at the same time, let me say frankly that I feel I might say it with too little regret, that I am under an awful necessity to be what I am. If the truth were known, which I do not know, I have no concern with those friends whom I misunderstand or who misunderstand me. The fates only are unkind that keep us asunder; but my friend is ever kind. I am of the nature of stone. It takes the summer's sun to warm it. — My acquaintances sometimes imply that I am too cold, but each thing is warm enough for its kind. Is the stone too cold which absorbs the heat of the summer sun, and does not part with it during the night? Crystals, though they be of ice, are not too cold to melt; it was in melting that they were formed. Cold! I am most sensible of warmth in winter days. It is not the warmth of fire that you would have; everything is warm or cold according to its nature. It is not that I am too cold, but that our warmth and coldness are not of the same nature. Hence when I am absolutely warmest, I may be coldest to you. Crystal does not complain of crystal any more than the dove of its mate. You who complain that I am cold, find Nature cold. To me she is warm. My heat is latent to you. Fire itself is cold to whatever is not of a nature to be

warmed by it. . . . That I am cold means that I am of another nature. . . .

How swiftly the earth appears to revolve at sunset, — which at midday appears to rest on its axis.

Dec. 21, 1853. We are tempted to call these the finest days of the year. Take Fair Haven Pond, for instance, a perfectly level plain of snow, untrodden as yet by any fisherman, surrounded by snow-clad hills, dark, evergreen woods, and reddish oak leaves, so pure and still. The last rays of the sun falling on Baker Farm reflect a clear pink color. — I see the feathers of a partridge strewn along on the snow for a long distance, the work of some hawk, perhaps, for there is no track.

What a groveling appetite for profitless jest and amusement our countrymen have! Next to a good dinner, at least, they love a good joke, to have their sides tickled, to laugh sociably, as in the East they bathe and are shampooed. Curators of Lyceums write to me,

Dear Sir, — I hear that you have a lecture of some humor. Will you do us the favor to read it before the Bungtown Institute?

Dec. 22, 1851. If I am thus seemingly cold compared with my companion's warm, who knows but mine is a less transient glow, a steadier and more equable heat, like that of the

earth in spring, in which the flowers spring and expand. It is not words that I wish to hear or to utter, but relations that I wish to stand in, and it oftener happens, methinks, I go away unmet, unrecognized, ungreeted in my offered relation, than that you are disappointed of words.

I have seen in the form, in the expression of face, of a child three years old the tried magnanimity and grave nobility of ancient and departed worthies. I saw a little Irish boy, come from the distant shanty in the woods over the bleak railroad to school this morning, take his last step from the last snow-drift on to the schoolhouse door-step, floundering still, saw not his face nor his profile, only his mien; I imagined, saw clearly in imagination, his old worthy face behind the sober visor of his cap. Ah! this little Irish boy, I know not why, revives to my mind the worthies of antiquity. He is not drawn, he never was drawn, in a willow wagon. He progresses by his own brave steps. Has not the world waited for such a generation? Here he condescends to his a b c, without one smile, who has the lore of worlds uncounted in his brain. He speaks not of the adventures of the causeway. What was the bravery of Leonidas and his three hundred boys at the Pass of Thermopylæ to this infant's! They but dared to die,

he dares to live, and take his "reward of merit," perchance (without relaxing his face into a smile), that overlooks his unseen and unregardable merits. Little Johnny Riorden, who faces cold and routs it like a Persian army. While the charitable waddle about cased in furs, he, lively as a cricket, passes them on his way to school.

Dec. 22, 1852. Surveying the Hunt farm. A rambling, rocky, wild, moorish pasture this of Hunt's, with two or three great white oaks to shade the cattle, which the farmer would not take fifty dollars apiece for, though the shipbuilder wanted them.

It is pleasant, as you are cutting a path through a swamp, to see the color of the different woods, the yellowish dogwood, the green prinos (?), and on the upland, the splendid yellow barberry. . . . You cannot go out so early but you will find the track of some wild creature.

Returning home just after the sun had sunk below the horizon, I saw from N. Barrett's a fire made by boys on the ice near the Red bridge which looked like the bright reflection of the setting sun from the water under the bridge, so clear, so little lurid in this winter evening.

Dec. 22, 1858. P. M. To Walden. I see in

the cut near the shanty site quite a flock of *Fringilla hyemalis* and goldfinches *together* on the snow and weeds and ground. Hear the well-known mew and watery twitter of the last, and the drier "chill chill" of the former. These burning yellow birds, with a little black and white in their coat flaps, look warm above the snow. There may be thirty goldfinches, very brisk and pretty tame. They hang, head downwards, on the weeds. I hear of their coming to pick sunflower seeds in Melvin's garden these days.

Dec. 22, 1859. Another fine winter day. — P. M. To Flint's Pond. . . . We pause and gaze into the Mill brook on the Turnpike bridge. I see a good deal of cress there on the bottom for a rod or two, the only green thing to be seen. . . . Is not this the plant which most, or most conspicuously, preserves its greenness in the winter? . . . It is as green as ever, and waving in the stream as in summer.

How nicely is Nature adjusted. The least disturbance of her equilibrium is betrayed and corrects itself. As I looked down on the surface of the brook, I was surprised to see a leaf floating, as I thought, up stream, but I was mistaken. The motion of a particle of dust on the surface of any brook far inland shows which way the earth declines toward the sea, which

way lies the constantly descending route, and the only one.

I see in the chestnut woods near Flint's Pond where squirrels have collected the small chestnut burs left on the trees, and opened them generally at the base of the trunks on the snow. These are, I think, all small and imperfect burs, which do not so much as open in the fall, and are rejected then, but hanging on the tree, they have this use, at least, as the squirrels' winter food. . . .

The fisherman stands still and erect on the ice, awaiting our approach, as usual forward to say that he has had no luck. He has been here since early morning, and for some reason or other he has had no luck; the fishes won't bite, you won't catch him here again in a hurry. They all tell the same story. The amount of it is, he has had "fisherman's luck," and if you walk that way, you may find him at his old post to-morrow. It is hard, to be sure; four little fishes to be divided between three men, and two and a half miles to walk; and you have only got a more ravenous appetite for the supper which you have not earned. However, the pond floor is not a bad place whereon to spend a winter day.

Dec. 23, 1837. Crossed the river to-day on the ice. Though the weather is raw and win

try, and the ground covered with snow, I noticed a solitary robin. . . .

In the side of the high bank by the leaning hemlock there were some curious crystallizations. Wherever the water or other cause had formed a hole in the bank, its throat and outer edge, like the entrance to a citadel of the olden time, bristled with a glistening ice armor. In one place you might see minute ostrich feathers which seemed the waving plumes of the warriors filing into the fortress, in another, the glancing fan-shaped banners of the Liliputian host, and in another, the needle-shaped particles collected into bundles resembling the plumes of the pine, might pass for a phalanx of spears. The whole hill was like an immense quartz rock with minute crystals sparkling from innumerable crannies.

Dec. 23, 1841. The best man's spirit makes a fearful sprite to haunt his tomb. The ghost of a priest is no better than that of a highwayman. It is pleasant to hear of one who has blest whole regions after his death by having frequented them while alive, who has profaned or tabooed no place by being buried in it. It adds not a little to the fame of Little John that his grave was long "celebrous for the yielding of excellent whetstones."

A forest is in all mythologies a sacred place;

as the oaks among the Druids, and the grove of Egeria, and even in more familiar and common life, as "Barnsdale wood" and "Sherwood." Had Robin Hood no Sherwood to resort to, it would be difficult to invest his story with the charms it has got. It is always the tale that is untold, the deeds done, and the life lived in the unexplored scenery of the wood, that charm us and make us children again, to read his ballads and hear of the greenwood tree.

Dec. 23, 1851. . . . It is a record of the mellow and ripe moments that I would keep. I would not preserve the husk of life, but the kernel. When the cup of life is full and flowing over, preserve some drops as a specimen sample; when the intellect enlightens the heart and the heart warms the intellect.—Thoughts sometimes possess our heads when we are up and about our business which are the exact counterpart of the bad dreams we sometimes have by night, and I think the intellect is equally inert in both cases. Very frequently, no doubt, the thoughts men have are the consequence of something they have eaten or done. Our waking moods and humors are our dreams, but whenever we are truly awake and serene and healthy in all our senses, we have memorable visions. Who that takes up a book wishes for the report of the clogged bowels or the impure blood?

Dec. 23, 1855. P. M. To Conantum End. A very bright and pleasant day with a remarkably soft wind from a little N. of W. The frost has come out so in the rain of yesterday, that I avoid the muddy plowed fields, and keep on the green ground which shines with moisture. . . .

I admire those old root fences which have almost disappeared from tidy fields, white pine roots got out when the neighboring meadow was a swamp, the monuments of many a revolution. These roots have not penetrated into the ground, but spread over the surface, and having been cut off four or five feet from the stump were hauled off and set up on their edges for a fence. The roots were not merely interwoven, but grown together into solid frames, full of loop-holes like Gothic windows of various sizes and all shapes, triangular, and oval, and harp-like, and the slenderer parts are dry and resonant like harp strings. They are rough and unapproachable, with a hundred snags and horns, which bewilder and balk the calculation of the walker who would surmount them. The part of the trees above ground present no such fantastic forms. Here is one seven paces or more than a rod long, six feet high in the middle, and yet only one foot thick, and two men could turn it up. In this case the roots were six or nine inches thick at the extremities. The roots of pines in swamps

grow thus in the form of solid frames or rackets, and those of different trees are interwoven withal so that they stand on a very broad foot, and stand or fall together to some extent before the blasts as herds meet the assaults of beasts of prey with serried front. You have thus only to dig into the swamp a little way to find your fence, post, rails, and slats already solidly grown together, and of material more durable than any timber. How pleasing a thought that a field should be fenced with the roots of the trees got out in clearing the land a century before. I regret them as mementos of the primitive forest. The tops of the same trees made into fencing stuff would have decayed generations ago. These roots are singularly unobnoxious to the effects of moisture. . . .

Think of the life of a kitten, ours, for instance. Last night her eyes set in a fit; it is doubtful if she will ever come out of it, and she is set away in a basket and submitted to the recuperative powers of nature; this morning running up the clothes' pole, and erecting her back in frisky sport to every passer.

Dec. 23, 1856. Some savage tribes must share the experience of the lower animals in their relation to man. With what thoughts must the Esquimau manufacture his knife from the rusty hoop of a cask drifted to his shores, not

a natural, but an artificial product, the work of man's hands, the waste of the commerce of a superior race whom perhaps he never saw!

The cracking of the ground is a phenomenon of the coldest nights. After being waked by the loud cracks of the 18th at Amherst, a man told me in the morning that he had seen a crack running across the plain (I saw it) almost broad enough to put his hand into. This was an exaggeration. It was not one fourth of an inch wide. I saw a great many the same forenoon running across the road in Nashua, every few rods, and also by our house in Concord the same day when I got home. So it seems the ground was cracking all the country over. Partly, no doubt, because there was so little snow, or none. None at Concord.

If the writer would interest readers, he must report so much life, using a certain satisfaction always as a *point d'appui*. However mean and limited, it must be a genuine and contented life that he speaks out of. His readers must have the essence or oil of himself, tried out of the fat of his experience and joy.

Dec. 23, 1860. . . . Larks were about our house the middle of this month.

Dec. 24, 1840. The same sun has not yet shone on me and my friend. He would hardly have to look at me to recognize me, but glimmer

with half-shut eye like some friendly distant taper when we are benighted. — I do not talk to any intellect in nature, but am presuming an infinite heart somewhere into which I play.

Dec. 24, 1841. I want to go soon and live away by the pond where I shall hear only the wind whispering among the reeds. It will be success if I shall have left myself behind. But my friends ask what I will do when I get there! Will it not be employment enough to watch the progress of the seasons?

Dec. 24, 1850. Saw a shrike pecking to pieces a small bird, apparently a snowbird. At length he took him up in his bill, almost half as big as himself, and flew slowly off with his prey dangling from his beak. I find that I had not associated such actions with my idea of birds. It was not bird-like.

It is never so cold but it melts somewhere. Our mason well remarked that he had sometimes known it to be melting and freezing at the same time on a particular side of a house; while it was melting on the roof, icicles were forming under the eaves. It is always melting and freezing at the same time where icicles are formed.

Our thoughts are with those among the dead into whose sphere we are rising, or who are now rising into our own. Others we inevitably forget, though they be brothers and sisters. Thus

the departed may be nearer to us than when they were present. At death, our friends and relatives either draw nearer to us, and are found out, or depart farther from us, and are forgotten. Friends are as often brought nearer together as separated by death.

Dec. 24, 1853. . . . Walden almost entirely open again. Skated across Flint's Pond, for the most part smooth, but with rough spots where the rain had not melted the snow. From the hill beyond I get an arctic view N. W. The mountains are of a cold slate color. It is as if they bounded the continent toward Behring's Straits.

In Weston's field in springy land on the edge of a swamp I counted thirty-three or four of those large silvery brown cocoons within a rod or two, and probably there are many more; about a foot from the ground, commonly on the main stem, though sometimes on a branch close to the stem, of the alder, sweet fern, brake, etc. The largest are four inches long by two and one half wide, bag-shaped and wrinkled, and partly concealed by dry leaves, alder, fern, etc., attached, as if sprinkled over them. This evidence of cunning in so humble a creature is affecting, for I am not ready to refer it to an intelligence which the creature does not share, as much as we do the prerogative of reason. This radiation of the brain! The bare silvery

cocoon would otherwise be too obvious. The worm has evidently said to itself, man or some other creature may come by and see my casket. I will disguise it, will hang a screen before it. Brake, and sweet fern, and alder leaves are not only loosely sprinkled over it and dangling from it, but often, as it were, pasted close upon and almost incorporated into it.

Dec. 24, 1854. Some three inches of snow fell last night and this morning, concluding with a fine rain, which produced a slight glaze, the first of the winter. This gives the woods a hoary aspect, and increases the stillness by making the leaves immovable even in a considerable wind.

Dec. 24, 1856. . . . Noticed at E. end of the westernmost Andromeda Pond the slender spikes of Lycopus with half-a-dozen little spherical dark brown whorls of pungently fragrant or spicy seeds, somewhat nutmeg-like or even like flagroot (?) when bruised. I am not sure that the seeds of any other mint are thus fragrant now. It scents your handkerchief or pocket-book finely when the crumbled whorls are sprinkled over them. — It was very pleasant walking thus before the storm was over, in the soft, subdued light. We are more domesticated in nature when our vision is confined to near and familiar objects. Did not see a track

of any animal till returning, near Well-Meadow Field, where many foxes (?), one of whom I had a glimpse of, had been coursing back and forth in the path and near it for three quarters of a mile. They had made quite a path.

I do not take snuff. In my winter walks I stoop and bruise between my thumb and finger the dry whorls of the Lycopus or water horehound, just rising above the snow, stripping them off, and smell that. That is as near as I come to the Spice Islands.

Dec. 24, 1859. . . . I measure the blueberry bush on Flint's Pond Island. The five stems are united at the ground so as to make one round and solid trunk thirty-one inches in circumference, but probably they have grown together there, for they become separate at about six inches above. They may have sprung from different seeds of one berry. At three feet from the ground they measure eleven, eleven, eleven and one half, eight, and six and one half or on an average nine and one half inches. I climbed up and found a comfortable seat, with my feet four feet from the ground. There was room for three or four more there, but unfortunately this was not the season for berries. There were several other clumps of large ones in the neighborhood. One clump close by the former contained twenty-three stems within a

diameter of three feet, and their average diameter at three feet from the ground was about two inches. These had not been cut because they stood on this small island which has little wood beside, and therefore had grown thus large. . . .

The stems rise up in a winding and zigzag manner, one sometimes resting in the forks of its neighbor. Judging from those whose rings I have counted, the largest of those stems must be about sixty years old.

Dec. 25, 1840. The character of Washington has, after all, been undervalued, because not valued correctly. He was a proper Puritan hero. It is his erectness and persistency which attract me. A few simple deeds with a dignified silence for background, and that is all. He never fluctuated, nor lingered, nor stooped, nor swerved, but was nobly silent and assured. He was not the darling of the people, as no man of integrity can ever be, but was as much respected as loved. His instructions to his steward, his refusal of a crown, his interview with his officers at the termination of the war, his thoughts after his retirement, as expressed in a letter to La Fayette, his remarks to another correspondent on his being chosen president, his last words to Congress, and the unparalleled respect which his most distinguished contemporaries, as Fox and Erskine, expressed for him, are

refreshing to read in these unheroic days. His behavior in the field and in council and his dignified and contented withdrawal to private life were great. He could advance and he could withdraw.

Dec. 25, 1841. It seems as if Nature did for a long time gently overlook the profanity of man. The wood still kindly echoes the strokes of the axe, and when the strokes are few and seldom, they add a new charm to a walk. All the elements strive to *naturalize* the sound. . . .

It is not a true apology for any coarseness to say that it is natural. The grim woods can afford to be very delicate and perfect in the details.

I don't want to feel as if my life were a sojourn any longer. That philosophy cannot be true which so paints it. It is time now that I begin to live.

Dec. 25, 1851. . . . I go forth to see the sun set. Who knows how it will set even half an hour beforehand? Whether it will go down in clouds or a clear sky? . . . I witness a beauty in the form or coloring of the clouds which addresses itself to my imagination. It is what it suggests and is the symbol of that I care for, and if, by any trick of science, you rob it of this, you do me no service and explain nothing. I, standing twenty miles off, see a crim-

son cloud in the horizon. You tell me it is a mass of vapor which absorbs all other rays and reflects the red; but that is nothing to the purpose, for this red vision excites me, stirs my blood, makes my thoughts flow. I have new and indescribable fancies, and you have not touched the secret of that influence. If there is not something mystical in your explanation, . . . it is quite insufficient. . . . What sort of science is that which enriches the understanding, but robs the imagination? Not merely robs Peter to pay Paul, but takes from Peter more than it ever gives to Paul. That is simply the way in which it speaks to the understanding, . . . but that is not the way it speaks to the imagination. . . . Just as inadequate to a mere mechanic would be a poet's account of a steam-engine. If we knew all things thus mechanically merely, should we know anything really? — It would be a true discipline for the writer to take the least film of thought that floats in the twilight sky of his mind for his theme, about which he has scarcely one idea (that would be teaching his ideas how to shoot), make a lecture on this, by assiduity and attention get perchance two views of the same, increase a little the stock of knowledge, clear a new field instead of manuring the old. . . . We seek too soon to ally the perceptions of the mind to the experience of the hand, to prove

our gossamer truths practical, to show their connection with every-day life (better show their distance from every-day life), to relate them to the cider mill and the banking institution. . . . That way of viewing things you know of, least insisted on by you however, least remembered, take that view, adhere to that, insist on that; see all things from that point of view. Will you let these intimations go unattended to, and watch the door bell or knocker? . . . Do not speak for other men; think for yourself. You are shown as in a vision the kingdoms of this world, and of all the worlds, but you prefer to look in upon a puppet show. Though you should speak but to one kindred mind in all time, though you should not speak to one, but only utter aloud, that you may the more completely realize and live in, the idea which contains the reason of your life, that you may build yourself up to the height of your conceptions, that you may remember your creator in the days of your youth, and justify his ways to man, that the end of life may not be its amusement.

Dec. 25, 1853. P. M. Skated to Fair Haven and above. . . . About 4 P. M. the sun sank behind a cloud and the pond began to whoop or boom. I noticed the same yesterday at the same hour on Flint's. It was perfectly silent before. The weather in both cases clear, cold, and windy.

It is a sort of belching, and as C. said, somewhat frog-like. I suspect it did not continue to whoop long either night. It is a very pleasing phenomenon, so dependent on the attitude of the sun.

When I go to Boston, I go naturally straight through the city down to the end of Long Wharf and look off, for I have no cousins in the back alleys. The water and the vessels are novel and interesting. What are our maritime cities but the shops and dwellings of merchants about a wharf projecting into the sea where there is a convenient harbor, on which to land the produce of other climes, and at which to load the exports of your own. Next in interest to me is the market where the produce of our own country is collected. Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Charleston, New Orleans, and many others are the names of wharves projecting into the sea. They are good places to take in or to discharge a cargo. I see a great many barrels and fig drums, and piles of wood for umbrella sticks, and blocks of granite and ice, etc., and that is Boston. Great piles of goods, and the means of packing and conveying them, much wrapping paper and twine, many crates and hogsheads and trucks, that is Boston. The more barrels, the more Boston. The museums and scientific societies and libraries are accidental. They gather around the barrels to save carting.

Apparently the ice is held down on the sides of the river by being frozen to the shore and the weeds, and so is overflowed there; but in the middle it is lifted up and makes room for the tide.

I saw just above Fair Haven Pond two or three places where just before the last freezing, when the ice was softened and partly covered with sleet, there had been a narrow canal about eight inches wide quite across the river from meadow to meadow. I am constrained to believe, from the peculiar character of it on the meadow end, where in one case it divided and crossed itself, that it was made either by musk-rats or otters or minks repeatedly crossing there. One end was, for some distance, like an otter trail in the soft upper part of the ice, not worn through.

Dec. 25, 1856. P. M. To Lee's Cliff. A strong wind from the N. W. is gathering the snow into picturesque drifts behind the walls. As usual, they resemble shells more than anything else, sometimes the prows of vessels, also the folds of a white napkin or counterpane dropped over a bonneted head. There are no such picturesque snowdrifts as are formed behind loose and open stone walls. . . .

Take long walks in stormy weather, or through deep snows in the fields and woods, if you would

keep your spirits up. Deal with brute nature. Be cold and hungry and weary.

Dec. 25, 1858. . . . Now that the sun is setting, all its light seems to glance over the snow-clad pond [Walden], and strike the rocky shore under the pitch pines at the N. E. end. Though the bare, rocky shore there is only a foot or a foot and a half high, as I look, it reflects so much light that the rocks are singularly distinct, as if the pond showed its teeth. . . . How full of soft, pure light the western sky now, after sunset! I love to see the outlines of the pines against it. Unless you watch, you do not know when the sun goes down. It is like a candle extinguished without smoke. A moment ago you saw that glittering orb amid the dry oak leaves in the horizon and now you can detect no trace of it. . . .

But for all voice in that serene hour, I hear an owl hoot. How glad I am to hear him rather than the most eloquent man of the age.

Dec. 25, 1859. How different are men and women, *e. g.*, in respect to the adornment of their heads. Do you ever see an old or jammed bonnet on the head of a woman at a public meeting? But look at any assembly of men with their hats on; how large a proportion of the hats will be old, weather-beaten, and indented; but, I think, so much more picturesque and in-

teresting. One farmer rides by my door in a hat which it does me good to see, there is so much character in it, so much independence, to begin with, and then affection for his old friends, etc., etc. I should not wonder if there were lichens on it. Think of painting a hero in a brand-new hat! The chief recommendation of the Kossuth hat is that it looks old to start with, and almost as good as new to end with. Indeed, it is generally conceded that a man does not look the worse for a somewhat dilapidated hat. But go to a lyceum and look at the bonnets and various other head gear of the women and girls (who, by the way, keep their hats on, it being too dangerous and expensive to take them off), why, every one looks as fragile as a butterfly's wings, having just come out of a bandbox, as it will go into a bandbox again when the lyceum is over. Men wear their hats for use, women theirs for ornament. I have seen the greatest philosopher in the town with what the traders would call a "shocking bad hat" on, but the woman whose bonnet does not come up to the mark is at best a blue-stocking. The man is not particularly proud of his beaver and musquash but the woman flaunts her ostrich and sable in your face. Ladies are in haste to dress as if it were cold or as if it were warm, though it may not yet be so, merely to display a new dress.

Dec. 26, 1840. . . . When the pond is frozen I do not suspect the wealth under my feet. How many pickerel are poised on easy fin fathoms below the loaded wain. The revolution of the seasons must be a curious phenomenon to them. Now the sun and wind brush aside their curtain, and they see the heavens again.

Sunday, Dec. 26, 1841. . . . When I hear this bell ring, I am carried back to years and Sabbaths when I was newer and more innocent, I fear, than now, and it seems to me as if there were a world within a world. Sin, I am sure, is not in overt acts, or indeed in acts of any kind, but is in proportion to the time which has come behind us, and displaced eternity, to the degree in which our elements are mixed with the elements of the world. The whole duty of life is implied in the question, how to respire and aspire both at once.

Dec. 26, 1850. The pine woods seen from the hill-tops, now that the ground is covered with snow, are not green, but a dark brown, greenish brown, perhaps. You see dark patches of wood.

Dec. 26, 1851. I observed this afternoon that when E—— H—— came home from sledding wood and unyoked his oxen, they made a business of stretching and scratching themselves with their horns, rubbing themselves against the posts, and licking themselves in those parts

which the yoke had prevented their reaching all day. The human way in which they behaved affected me even pathetically. They were too serious to be glad that their day's work was done; they had not spirits enough left for that. They behaved as a tired wood-chopper might. This was to me a new phase in the life of the laboring ox. It is painful to think how they may sometimes be overworked.

Dec. 26, 1853. This forenoon it snowed pretty hard for some hours, the first snow of any consequence thus far. It is about three inches deep. I go out at 2½ P. M. just as it ceases. Now is the time before the wind rises, or the sun has shone, to go forth and see the snow on the trees. The clouds have lifted somewhat, but are still spitting snow a little. The vapor of the steam-engine does not rise high in the misty air. . . . The snow has fallen so gently that it forms an upright wall on the slenderest twig. The agreeable maze which the branches make is more obvious than ever, and every twig thus laden is as still as the hillside itself. The pitch pines are covered with soft globular masses. The effect of the snow is to press down the forest, confound it with the grasses, and create a new surface to the earth above, shutting us in with it, and we go along somewhat like moles through our galleries. The sight of the pure and track-

less road up Brister's Hill, with branches and trees supporting snowy burdens bending over it on each side, would tempt us to begin life again. The ice is covered up and skating gone. The bare hills are so white that I cannot see their outlines against the misty sky. The snow lies handsomely on the shrub-oaks, like a coarse braiding in the air. They have so many small and zigzag twigs that it comes near to filling up with a light snow to that depth. The hunters are already out with dogs to follow the first beast that makes a track. — Saw a small flock of tree sparrows in the sproutlands under Bartlett's Cliff. Their metallic chip is much like the lisp of the chickadee. — All weeds with their seeds rising dark above the snow are now remarkably conspicuous, which before were not observed against the dark earth. — I passed by the pitch pine that was struck by lightning, and was impressed with awe on looking up and seeing that broad, distinct, spiral mark, more distinct even than when made eight years ago, as one might groove a walking stick, . . . mark where a terrific and resistless bolt came down from heaven, out of the harmless sky, eight years ago. It seemed a sacred spot. I felt that we had not learned much since the days of Tullus Hostilius. The tree at length shows the effect of the shock, and the woodpeckers have begun to bore it on one side.

Walden still open. Saw in it a small diver, probably a grebe or dobchick, dipper or what not, with the markings, so far as I saw, of the crested grebe, but smaller. It had a black head, a white ring about its neck, a white breast, black back, and apparently no tail. It dived and swam a few rods under water, and when on the surface kept turning round and round warily, nodding its head the while. This is the only pond hereabouts that is open.

Was overtaken by an Irishman seeking work. I asked him if he could chop wood. He said he was not long in this country, that he could cut one side of a tree well enough, but he had not learned to change hands and cut the other, without going round it, what we call crossing the calf. They get very small wages at this season of the year, almost give up the ghost in the effort to keep soul and body together. He left me on the run to find a new master.

Dec. 26, 1854. At R——'s [New Bedford]. I do not remember to have ever seen such a day as this in Concord. There is no snow here (though there has been excellent sleighing at Concord since the 5th), but it is very muddy, the frost coming out of the ground as in spring with us.

I went to walk in the woods with R. It was wonderfully warm and pleasant. The cockerels

crowed just as in a spring day at home. I felt the winter breaking up in me, and if I had been at home, I should have tried to write poetry. They told me that this was not a rare day there, that they had little or no winter such as we have, and it was owing to the influence of the Gulf Stream which was only sixty miles from Nantucket at the nearest, or one hundred and twenty miles from them. In mid-winter when the wind was S. E. or even S. W., they frequently had days as warm and debilitating as in summer. There is a difference of about a degree in latitude between Concord and New Bedford, but far more in climate. The American holly is quite common there, with its red berries still holding on, and is now their Christmas evergreen. I heard the larks sing strong and sweet, and saw robins. . . . R. said that pheasants from England (where they are not indigenous) had been imported into Naushon and are now killed there.

Dec. 26, 1855. After snow, rain, and hail yesterday and last night, we have this morning quite a glaze, there being at least an inch or two of crusted snow on the ground; the most we have had. The sun comes out at 9 A. M. and lights up the ice-incrusted trees. . . . I go to Walden *via* the almshouse and up the railroad. Trees seen in the west against the dark cloud, the sun shining on them, are perfectly white as

frost work, and their outlines very perfectly and distinctly revealed, great wisps that they are and ghosts of trees, with recurved twigs. The walls and fences are incased, and the fields bristle with a myriad of crystal spears. Already the wind is rising and a brattling is heard overhead in the street. The sun shining down a gorge over the woods at Brister's Hill reveals a wonderfully brilliant, as well as seemingly solid and diversified region in the air. The ice is from an eighth to a quarter of an inch thick about the twigs and pine needles, only one half as thick commonly on one side. The heads of the trees are bowed, and their plumes and needles stiff as if preserved under glass for the inspection of posterity. . . . The pines thus weighed down are sharp-pointed at top, and remind me of firs and even hemlocks, their drooping boughs being wrapped about them like the folds of a cloak or a shawl. The crust is already strewn with bits of the green needles which have been broken off. Frequently the whole top stands up bare, while the middle and lower branches are drooping and massed together, resting on one another. — But the low and spreading weeds in the fields and the woodpaths are the most interesting. Here are asters (savory-leaved), whose flat, imbricated calyxes, three quarters of an inch over, are surmounted and inclosed in a perfectly transparent

ice button, like a glass knob, through which you see the reflections of the brown calyx. These are very common. — Each little blue curl calyx has a spherical button, like those over a little boy's jacket, little sprigs of them, and the pennyroyal has still smaller spheres more regularly arranged about its stem, chandelier-wise, and still smells through the ice. The finest grasses support the most wonderful burdens of ice and most bunched on their minute threads. These weeds are spread and arched over into the snow again, countless little arches a few inches high, each cased in ice, which you break with a tinkling crash at each step. — The scarlet fruit of the cockspur lichen, seen glowing through the more opaque whitish or snowy crust of a stump, is, on close inspection, the richest sight of all, for the scarlet is increased and multiplied by reflection through the bubbles and hemispherical surfaces of the crust, as if it covered some vermilion grain thickly strewn. The brown cup lichens stand in their midst. The whole rough bark, too, is incased.

Already a squirrel has perforated the crust above the mouth of his burrow here and there, by the side of the path, and left some empty acorn shells on the snow. He has shoveled out this morning before the snow has frozen on his doorstep. . . .

Particularly are we attracted in the winter by

greenness and signs of growth, as the green and white shoots of grass and weeds pulled, or floating on the water, and also by color, as the cockspur lichens, crimson birds, etc.

4 P. M. Up railroad. Since the sun has risen higher and fairly triumphed over the clouds, the ice has glistened with all the prismatic hues. . . . The whole top of the pine forest, as seen miles off in the horizon, is of sharp points, the leading shoots with a few plumes.

In a true history or biography, of how little consequence those events of which so much is commonly made. . . . I find in my journal that the most important events in my life, if recorded at all, are not dated.

Dec. 26, 1858. P. M. To Jenny Dugan's. . . . Call at a farmer's this Sunday P. M., where I surprise the well-to-do masters of the house, lounging in very ragged clothes, for which they think it necessary to apologize, and one of them is busy laying the supper table (at which he invites me to sit down at last), bringing up cold meat from the cellar and a lump of butter on the end of his knife, and making the tea by the time his mother gets home from church. Thus sincere and homely, as I am glad to know, is the actual life of these New England men, wearing rags indoors there which would disgrace a beggar (and are not beggars and paupers they who

could *be* disgraced so), and doing the indispensable work, however humble. How much better and more humane it was than if they had imported and set up among their penates a headless torso from the ruins of Ireland! I am glad to find that our New England life has a genuine, humane core to it; that inside, after all, there is so little pretense and brag. . . . The middle-aged son sits there in the old unpainted house in a ragged coat, and helps his old mother about her work when the field does not require him.

Dec. 26, 1859. P. M. Skate to Lee's Bridge. . . . I see a brute with a gun in his hand standing motionless over a muskrat's house which he has destroyed. I find that he has visited every one in the neighborhood of Fair Haven Pond, above and below, and broken them all down, laying open the interior to the water, and then stood watchful close by for the poor creature to show its head for a breath of air. There lies the red carcass of one whose pelt he has taken on the spot, . . . and for his afternoon's cruelty that fellow will be rewarded with ninepence, perchance. When I consider the opportunities of the civilized man for getting ninepences and getting light, this seems to me more savage than savages are. Depend on it that whoever thus treats the muskrat's house, his refuge when the water is frozen thick, he and his family will not come to

a good end. So many of these houses being broken open, twenty or thirty I see, I look into the open hole, and find in it, in almost every instance, many pieces of the white root, with the little leaf bud curled up, which I take to be the yellow lily root. The leaf bud unrolled has the same scent as the yellow lily. There will be a half dozen of these pointed buds, more or less green, coming to a point at the end of the root. Also I see a little coarser, what I take to be the green leaf stalk of the *pontederia*, for I see a little of the stipule sheathing the stalk from within it (?) . . . In one hole there was a large quantity of the root I have mentioned, its leaf buds attached or bitten off. The root was generally five or six eighths of an inch in diameter. It must, I think, be the principal food of the muskrat at this time. If you open twenty cabins you will find it in at least three quarters of them, and nothing else unless a very little *pontederia* leaf stem (?). By eating, or killing at least, so many lily buds, they must thin out the plant considerably. — I saw no fresh clam shells in the holes and scarcely any on the ice anywhere on the edge of open places, nor are they probably deposited in a heap under the ice. It may be, however, that the shells are opened in the hole, and then dropped in the water near by.

Twice this winter I have noticed a muskrat

floating in a placid, smooth, open place in the river, when it was frozen for a mile each side, looking at first like a bit of stump or frozen meadow, but showing its whole upper outline from nose to end of tail, perfectly still till he observed me, then suddenly diving and steering under the ice toward some cabin's entrance or other retreat half-a-dozen or more rods off.

As some of the tales of our childhood, the inventions of some Mother Goose, will haunt us when we are grown up, so the race itself still believes in some of the fables with which its infancy has amused and imposed on it, *e. g.*, the fable of the Cranes and Pygmies which learned men endeavored to believe or explain in the last century.

Aristotle being almost, if not quite, the first to write systematically on animals, gives them of course only popular names, such as were common with the hunters, fowlers, fishers, and farmers of his day. He used no scientific terms. But he having the priority, and having, as it were, created science, and given it its laws, those popular Greek names, even when the animal to which they were applied cannot be identified, have been in great part preserved, and make the learned, far-fetched, and commonly unintelligible names of genera to-day, *e. g.*, ὁλοθούριον, etc. His "History of Animals" has thus become a very storehouse of scientific nomenclature.

Dec. 26, 1860. M—— sent to me yesterday a perfect *Strix asio*, or red owl of Wilson, not at all gray. This is now generally made the same with the *nævia*, but while some consider the red the old, others consider it the young. This is, as Wilson says, a bright "nut-brown." . . . It is twenty-three inches alar extent by about eleven long. Feet extend one inch beyond tail. Cabot makes the old bird red, Audubon, the young.

To such an excess have our civilization and division of labor come that A., a professional huckleberry picker, has hired B.'s field, and we will suppose is now gathering the crop, perhaps with the aid of a patented machine. C., a professed cook, is superintending the cooking of a pudding made of some of the berries, while Professor D., for whom the pudding is intended, sits in his library writing a book, a work on the Vaccinieæ, of course. And now the result of this downward course will be seen in that book, which should be the ultimate fruit of the huckleberry field, and account for the existence of the two professors who come between D. and A. It will be worthless. There will be none of the spirit of the huckleberry in it. The reading of it will be a weariness to the flesh. To use a homely illustration, it is to save at the spile, and waste at the bung. I believe in a different kind

of division of labor, and that Professor D. should divide himself between the library and the huckleberry field.

Dec. 27, 1837. . . . The real heroes of minstrelsy have been ideal, even when the names of actual heroes have been perpetuated. The real Arthur, who "not only excelled the experienced past, but also the possible future," of whom it was affirmed, after many centuries, that he was not dead, but "had withdrawn from the world into some magical region from which at a future crisis he was to reappear, and lead the Cymri in triumph through the island," whose character and actions were the theme of the bards of Bretagne, and the foundation of their interminable romances, was only an ideal impersonation. — Men claim for the ideal an actual existence also, but do not often expand the actual into the ideal. "If you do not believe me, go into Bretagne, and mention in the streets and villages that Arthur is really dead like other men. You will not escape with impunity. You will be either hooted with the curses of your hearers, or stoned to death."

The most remarkable instance of home-sickness is that of the colony of Franks transplanted by the Romans from the German Ocean to the Euxine, who, at length resolving to a man to abandon the country, seized the vessels which

carried them out, and reached at last their native shores, after innumerable difficulties and dangers upon the Mediterranean and the Atlantic.

Dec. 27, 1851. Sunset from Fair Haven Hill. This evening there are many clouds in the west into which the sun goes down, so that we have our visible or apparent sunset and red evening sky as much as fifteen minutes before the real sunset. You must be early on the hills to witness such a sunset, — by half-past four at least. Then all the vales, even to the horizon, are full of a purple vapor which half veils the distant mountains, and the windows of undiscoverable farm-houses shine like an early candle or a fire. After the sun has gone behind a cloud, there appears to be a gathering of clouds around his setting, and for a few moments his light in the amber sky seems more intense, brighter, and purer than at noonday, . . . like the ecstasy which we are told sometimes lights up the face of a dying man. That is a serene or evening death, like the end of the day. Then at last through all the grossness which has accumulated in the atmosphere of day is seen a patch of serene sky, fairer by contrast with the surrounding dark than midday, and even the gross atmosphere of the day is gilded and made pure as amber by the setting sun, as if the day's sins were forgiven it.

The man is blessed who every day is permitted to behold anything so pure and serene as the western sky at sunset, while revolutions vex the world.

There is no winter necessarily in the sky, though snow covers the earth. The sky is always ready to answer our moods. We can see summer there or winter.

Dec. 27, 1852. Not a particle of ice in Walden to-day. Paddled across it, and took my new boat out. A black and white duck on it. Flint's and Fair Haven frozen up. Ground bare. River open.

Dec. 27, 1853. High wind with more snow in the night. . . . Snowy ridges cross the village street, and make it look as wild and bleak as a pass of the Rocky Mountains, or the Sierra Nevada.

P. M. To Fair Haven Pond, up meadows and river. The snow blows like spray fifteen feet high across the fields, while the wind roars in the trees as in the rigging of a vessel. It is altogether like the ocean in a storm. . . .

It is surprising what things the snow betrays. I had not seen a meadow-mouse all summer, but no sooner does the snow come and spread its mantle over the earth than it is printed with the tracks of countless mice and larger animals. I see where the mouse has dived into a little

hole in the snow not larger than my thumb by the side of a weed, and a yard farther reappeared, and so on alternately above and beneath. A snug life it lives. — The crows come nearer to the houses, alight on trees by the roadside, apparently being put to it for food. . . .

It is a true winter sunset, almost cloudless, clear, cold, indigo-like, along the horizon. The evening (?) star is seen shining brightly before the twilight has begun. A rosy tint suffuses the eastern horizon. The outline of the mountains is wonderfully distinct and hard. They are a dark blue and very near. Wachusett looks like a right-whale over our bow, plowing the continent, with his flukes well down. He has a vicious look, as if he had a harpoon in him.

I wish I could buy at the shops some kind of India rubber that would rub out at once all that in my writing which it costs me so many perusals, so many months, if not years, and so much reluctance, to erase.

Dec. 27, 1857. . . . Walden is almost entirely skimmed over. It will probably be completely frozen over to-night.

I frequently hear a dog bark at some distance in the night, which, strange as it may seem, reminds me of the cooing or crowing of a ring-dove which I heard every night a year ago at Perth Amboy. It was sure to coo on the slightest

noise in the house, as good as a watch-dog. The crowing of cocks too reminds me of it, and now I think of it, it had precisely the intonation and accent of the cat-owl's hoó hoo-hoo-o-o, in each case, a sonorous dwelling on the last syllable.

They get the pitch and break ground with the first note, and then prolong and swell it in the last.

The commonest and cheapest sounds, as the barking of a dog, produce the same effect on fresh and healthy ears that the rarest music does. It depends on your appetite for sound. Just as a crust is sweeter to a healthy appetite than confectionery to a pampered or diseased one. It is better that these cheap sounds be music to us than that we have the rarest ears for music in any other sense. I have lain awake at night many a time to think of the barking of a dog which I had heard long before, bathing my being again in those waves of sound, as a frequenter of the opera might lie awake remembering the music he had heard.

As my mother made my pockets once of father's old fire bags, with the date of the formation of the society on them, 1794 (though they made but rotten pockets), so we put our meaning into those old mythologies. I am sure that the Greeks were commonly innocent of any such *double entendre* as we attribute to them.

One while we do not wonder that so many commit suicide, life is so barren and worthless. We only live on by an effort of the will. Suddenly our condition is ameliorated, and even the barking of a dog is a pleasure to us. So closely is our happiness bound up with our physica condition, and one reacts on the other.

Do not despair of life. You have no doubt force enough to overcome your obstacles. Think of the fox prowling through wood and field in a winter night for something to satisfy his hunger. Notwithstanding cold and the hounds and traps, his race survives. I do not believe any of them ever committed suicide. I saw this afternoon where probably a fox had rolled some small carcass in the snow.

I am disappointed by most essays and lectures. I find that I had expected the authors would have some life, some very private experience to report, which would make it comparatively unimportant in what style they expressed themselves, but commonly they have only a talent to exhibit. The new magazine which all had been expecting, may contain only another love story, as naturally told as the last, perchance, but without the slightest novelty in it. It may be a mere vehicle for Yankee phrases.

What interesting contrasts our climate affords. In July you rush panting into the pond to cool

yourself in the tepid water, when the stones on the bank are so heated that you cannot hold one tightly in your hand, and horses are melting on the road. — Now you walk on the same pond frozen, amid the snow, with numbed fingers and feet, and see the water target bleached and stiff in the ice.

Dec. 27, 1858. Talk of Fate! How little one can know what is *fated* to another! What he can do and what he cannot do. I doubt whether one can give or receive any very pertinent advice. In all important crises, one can only consult his genius. Though he were the most shiftless and craziest of mortals, if he still recognizes that he has any genius to consult, none may presume to go between him and her. They, methinks, are poor stuff and creatures of a miserable fate who can be advised and persuaded in very important steps. Show me a man who consults his genius, and you have shown me a man who cannot be advised. You may know what a thing costs or is worth to you, you can never know what it costs or is worth to me. All the community may scream because one man is born who will not conform, because conformity to him is death. He is so constituted. They know nothing about his case, they are fools when they presume to advise him. The man of genius knows what he is aiming at.

Nobody else knows, and he alone knows when something comes between him and his object. In the course of generations, however, men will excuse you for not doing as they do, if you will bring enough to pass in your own way.

Dec. 28, 1840. The snow hangs on the trees as the fruit of the season. In those twigs which the wind has preserved naked there is a warmer green for the contrast. The whole tree exhibits a kind of interior and household comfort, a sheltered and covert aspect. It has the snug inviting look of a cottage on the moors, buried in snow. — Our voices ring hollowly through the woods as through a chamber, the twigs crackle under foot with private and household echoes. I have observed on a clear winter's morning that the woods have their southern window as well as the house, through which the first beams of the sun stream along their aisles and corridors. The sun goes up swiftly behind the limbs of the white pine, as the sashes of a window.

Dec. 28, 1852. . . . Both for bodily and mental health court the present. Embrace health wherever you find her. . . .

It is worth while to apply what wisdom one has to the conduct of his life, surely. I find myself oftenest wise in little things and foolish in great ones. That I may accomplish some petty,

particular affair well, I live my whole life coarsely. A broad margin of leisure is as beautiful in a man's life as in a book. Haste makes waste no less in life than in housekeeping. Keep the time, observe the hours of the universe, not of the cars. What are threescore years and ten hurriedly and coarsely lived to moments of divine leisure, in which your life is coincident with the life of the universe. We live too fast and coarsely, just as we eat too fast, and do not know the true savor of our food. We consult our will and our understanding and the expectation of men, not our genius. I can impose upon myself tasks which will crush me for life and prevent all expansion, and this I am but too inclined to do. One moment of life costs many hours, hours not of business, but of preparation and invitation. Yet the man who does not betake himself at once and desperately to sawing is called a loafer, though he may be knocking at the doors of heaven all the while, which shall surely be opened to him. That aim in life is highest which requires the highest and finest discipline. How much, what infinite leisure it requires, as of a life-time, to appreciate a single phenomenon! You must camp down beside it as for life, having reached your land of promise, and give yourself wholly to it. It must stand for the whole world to you, symbolical of all

things. The least partialness is your own defect of sight, and cheapens the experience fatally. Unless the humming of a gnat is as the music of the spheres, and the music of the spheres is as the humming of a gnat, they are naught to me. It is not communications to serve for a history (which are science), but the great story itself, that cheers and satisfies us.

Dec. 28, 1853. . . . I hear and see tree sparrows about the weeds in the garden. They seem to visit the gardens with the earliest snow, or is it that they are more obvious against the white ground. By their sharp, silvery chip, perchance, they inform each other of their whereabouts and keep together.

Dec. 28, 1854. [Nantucket.] A misty rain as yesterday. Captain Gardiner carried me to Siasconset in his carriage. . . . He is extensively engaged in raising pines on the island. There is not a tree to be seen except such as are set out about houses. . . . He showed me several lots of his of different sizes, one tract of three hundred acres sown in rows with a planter, where the young trees, two years old, were just beginning to green the ground, and I saw one of Norway pine and our pitch, mixed, eight years old, which looked quite like a forest at a distance. The Norway pines had grown the faster, with a longer shoot, and had a bluer look

at a distance, more like the white pine The common pitch pines have a reddish crisped look at top. Some are sown in rows, some broadcast. At first Captain Gardiner was alarmed to find that the ground moles had gone along in the furrows directly under the plants and so injured the roots as to kill many of the trees, and he sowed over again. He was also discouraged to find that a sort of spindle worm had killed the leading shoot of a great part of his neighbor's older trees. These plantations must very soon change the aspect of the island. His common pitch pine seed obtained from the Cape cost him about twenty dollars a bushel; at least about a dollar a quart with the wings; and they told him it took about eighty bushels of cones to make one such bushel of seeds. I was surprised to find that the Norway pine seed without the wings imported from France had cost not quite two dollars a bushel delivered at New York or Philadelphia. He has ordered eight hogsheads of the best, clear wingless seeds, at this rate. I *think* he said it took about a gallon to sow an acre. He had tried to get white pine seed, but in vain. The cones had not contained any of late. (?) This looks as if he meant to sow a good part of the island, though he said he might sell some of the seed. It is an interesting enterprise. . . . This island must look exactly like a prairie,

except that the view in clear weather is bounded by the sea. — Saw crows and robins, also saw and heard larks frequently, but most abundant running along the ruts or circling about just over the ground in small flocks, what the inhabitants call snow-birds, a gray, bunting-like bird about the size of the snow-bunting. Can it be the sea-side finch, or the savannah sparrow, or the shore lark? . . . A few years ago some one imported a dozen partridges from the main-land, but though some were seen for a year or two, not one had been seen for some time, and they were thought to be extinct. Captain Gardiner thought the raccoons, which had been very numerous, might have caught them. In Harrison days some coons were imported and turned loose. They multiplied very fast, and became quite a pest, killing hens, etc., and were killed in turn. Finally, people turned out and hunted them with hounds, and killed seventy-five at one time, since which he had not heard of any. There were foxes once, but none now, and no indigeous animal bigger than a ground mole. . . .

The last Indian, not of pure blood, died this very month, and I saw his picture with a basket of huckleberries in his hand.

Dec. 28, 1856. I am surprised to see the *Fringilla hyemalis* here. [Walden.] . . . The fishermen sit by their damp fire of rotten pine

wood, so wet and chilly that even smoke in their eyes is a kind of comfort. There they sit, ever and anon scanning their reels to see if any have fallen, and if not catching many fish, still getting what they went for, though they may not be aware of it, *i. e.*, a wilder experience than the town affords. . . .

I thrive best on solitude. If I have had a companion only one day in a week, unless it were one or two I could name, I find that the value of the week to me has been seriously affected. It dissipates my days, and often it takes me another week to get over it. As the Esquimaux of Smith's Strait in North Greenland laughed when Kane warned them of their utter extermination, cut off as they were by ice on all sides from the race, unless they attempted in season to cross the glacier southward, so do I laugh when you tell me of the danger of impoverishing myself by isolation. It is here that the walrus and the seal, and the white bear, and the eider ducks and auks on which I batten, most abound.

Dec. 28, 1858. P. M. To Walden. The earth is bare. I walk about the pond looking at the shores, since I have not paddled about it much of late years. What a grand place for a promenade! . . . That rocky shore under the pitch pines, which so reflects the light, is only

three feet wide by one foot high, yet there even to-day the ice is melted close to the edge, and just off this shore the pickerel are most abundant. This is the warm and sunny side to which any one, man, bird, or quadruped, would soonest resort in cool weather. I noticed a few chickadees there in the edge of the pines in the sun, lisping and twittering cheerfully to one another with a reference to me, I think, the cunning and innocent little birds. One a little farther off utters the phœbe note. There is a foot, more or less, of clear, open water at the edge here, and seeing this, one of these birds hops down, as if glad to find any open water at this season, and after prinking, it stands in the water on a stone, up to its belly, and dips its head, and flirts the water about vigorously, giving itself a good washing. I had not expected this at this season. No fear that it will catch cold. — The ice cracks suddenly with a shivering jar, like crockery or the brittlest material, such as it is, and I notice, as I sit here at this open edge, that each time the ice cracks, though it may be a good distance off toward the middle, the water here is very much agitated. The ice is about six inches thick.

Dec. 29, 1840. As echo makes me enunciate distinctly, so the sympathy of a friend gives plainness and point to my speech. This is the advantage of letter-writing.

Dec. 29, 1841. . . . Whole weeks or months of my summer life slide away in thin volumes like mist or smoke, till at length some warm morning, perchance, I see a sheet of mist blown down the brook to the swamp, its shadow flitting across the fields which have caught a new significance from that accident, and as that vapor is raised above the earth, so shall the next weeks be elevated above the plane of the actual; or a like experience may come when the setting sun slants across the pastures, and the cows low to my inward ear, and only enhance the stillness, and the eve is as the dawn, a beginning hour and not a final one, as if it would never have done, with its clear, western amber, inciting men to lives of limpid purity. At evening, other parts of my work shine than I had thought at noon, and I discover the real purport of my toil as when the husbandman has reached the end of the furrow and looks back, he can best tell where the pressed earth shines most. . . .

A man should go out of Nature with the chirp of the cricket or the trill of the veery singing in his ear. These earthly sounds should only die away for a season, as the strains of the harp rise and fall. Death is that expressive pause in the music of the blast. I would be as clean as ye, O Woods. I shall not rest till I am as innocent as you. I know that I shall sooner or later

attain to an unspotted innocence, for when I consider that state even now I am thrilled.

If we were wise enough, we should see to what virtue we were indebted for any happier moment we might have, nor doubt we had earned this at some time.

These motions everywhere in Nature must surely be the circulations of God; . . . the running stream, the waving tree, the roving wind, whence else their infinite health and freedom. I can see nothing so holy as unrelaxed play and frolic in this bower God has built for us. The suspicion of sin never comes to this experience. If men felt this they would never build temples even of marble or diamond (it would be sacrilege and profane), but disport them forever in this paradise. . . .

It seems as if only one trait, one little incident in human biography need to be said or written in some era, that all readers may go mad after it, and the man who did the miracle is made a demigod henceforth. — What we all do, not one can tell, and when some lucky speaker utters a truth of our experience and not of our speculation, we think he must have had the nine Muses and the three Graces to help him.

Dec. 29, 1851. The sun just risen. The ground is almost entirely bare. . . . It is warm as

an April morning. There is a sound of bluebirds in the air, and the cocks crow as in the spring. The steam curls up from the roofs and the ground. You walk with open cloak. It is exciting to behold the smooth, glassy surface of water where the melted snow has formed large puddles and ponds, and to see it running in the sluices. . . . In the afternoon to Saw mill brook with W. E. C. . . . It feels as warm as in summer. You sit on any fence rail and vegetate in the sun, and realize that the earth may produce peas again. Yet they say that this open and mild weather is unhealthy. That is always the way with them. How admirable it is that we can never foresee the weather, that it is always novel. Yesterday nobody dreamed of to-day. Nobody dreams of to-morrow. Hence the weather is ever the news. . . . This day yesterday was as incredible as any other miracle. Now all creatures feel it, even the cattle chewing stalks in the barn-yards, and perchance it has even penetrated to the lurking places of the crickets under the rocks.

Dec. 29, 1853. . . . A driving snow-storm all day, imprisoning most, stopping the cars, blocking up the roads. . . . The snow penetrates through the smallest crevices about doors and windows. . . . It is the worst snow-storm to bear that I remember. A strong wind from

the north blows the snow almost horizontally, and beside freezing you, almost takes your breath away. The driving snow blinds you, and when you are protected, you can see but a little way, it is so thick. Yet in spite of or on account of it all, I see the first flock of arctic snow-birds, *Emberiza nivalis*, near the depot, white and black, with a sharp whistle-like note.

What a contrast between the village street now and as it was last summer; the leafy elms, then resounding with the warbling vireo, robins, bluebirds, the fiery hangbird, etc., to which the villagers, kept in doors by the heat, listened through open lattices. Now it is like a street in Nova Zembla, if they were to have any there. I wade to the post office as solitary a traveler as ordinarily in a wood-path in winter. The snow is mid-leg deep, while drifts as high as one's head are heaped against the houses and fences, and here and there range across the street like snowy mountains. . . . There is not a track leading from any door to indicate that the inhabitants have been forth to-day, any more than there is the track of any quadruped by the wood-paths. It is all pure, untrodden snow, banked up against the houses now at 4 P. M. . . . In one place the drift covers the front yard fence, and stretches thence upward to the top of the front door, shutting all in. . . . Frequently the

snow lies banked up three or four feet high against the front doors, . . . there is a drift over each window, and the clapboards are all hoary with it. It is as if the inhabitants were all frozen to death, and now you threaded the desolate streets, weeks after that calamity. There is not a sleigh or vehicle of any kind on the Milldam; but one saddled horse on which a farmer has come into town. . . . Yet they are warmer, merrier than ever there within. At the post office they ask each traveler news of the cars, is there any train up or down, how deep the snow is on a level.

Of the snow bunting, Wilson says that they appear in the northern parts of the United States "early in December, or with the first heavy snow, particularly if drifted by high winds." This day answers to that description exactly. The wind is northerly. He adds that, "they are universally considered as the harbingers of severe cold weather." They come down from the extreme north, and are common to the two continents. He quotes Pennant as saying that they "inhabit not only Greenland, but even the dreadful climate of Spitzbergen where vegetation is nearly extinct, and scarcely any but cryptogamous plants are found. It therefore excites wonder how birds which are graminivorous in every other than those frost-bound regions

subsist; yet are there found in great flocks, both on the land and ice of Spitzbergen." Pennant also says that they inhabit in summer "the most naked Lapland Alps," and "descend in rigorous seasons into Sweden, and fill the roads and fields," on which account the uplanders call them "*hardwarsfogel*," hard weather-birds; he also says, "they overflow [in winter] the more southern countries in amazing multitudes." Wilson says their colors are very variable, "and the whiteness of their plumage is observed to be greatest toward the depth of winter." He also says truly that they seldom sit long, "being a roving, restless bird." Peabody says that in summer they are "pure white and black," but are not seen of that color here. Those I saw to-day were of that color. . . . He says they are white and rusty brown here. These are the true winter birds for you, these winged snowballs. I could hardly see them, the air was so full of driving snow. What hardy creatures! Where do they spend the night? . . .

The farmer considers how much pork he has in his barrel, how much meal in his bin, how much wood in his shed. Each family, perchance, sends forth one representative before night, who makes his way with difficulty to the grocery or the post office to learn the news, *i. e.*, to hear what others say to it, who can give the best ac-

count of it, best can name it, has waded farthest in it, has been farthest out, and can tell the biggest and most adequate story, and hastens back with the news. . . .

The thoughts and associations of summer and autumn are now as completely departed from our minds as the leaves are blown from the trees. Some withered deciduous ones are left to rustle, and our cold immortal evergreens. Some lichenous thoughts still adhere to us.

Dec. 29, 1855. Down railroad to Andromeda Ponds. . . . I see a shrike flying low beneath the level of the railroad, which rises and alights on the topmost twig of an elm within four or five rods. All ash or bluish slate above, down to mid-wings, dirty white breast, and a broad black mark through eyes on side of head; primaries (?) black, and some white appears when it flies. Most distinctive its small hooked bill (upper mandible). It makes no sound, but flits to the top of an oak farther off. Probably a male.

Dec. 29, 1856. P. M. To Warren Miles's Mill. We must go out and re-ally ourselves to Nature every day. We must make root, send out some little fibre at least, even every winter day. I am sensible that I am imbibing health when I open my mouth to the wind. Staying in the house breeds a sort of insanity always. Every

house is, in this sense, a hospital. A night and a forenoon is as much confinement to those wards as I can stand. I am aware that I recover some sanity, which I had lost, almost the instant that I come abroad.

Dec. 29, 1858. P. M. Skate to Israel Rice's. I think more of skates than of the horse or locomotive as annihilators of distance, for while I am getting along with the speed of the horse, I have at the same time the satisfactions of the horse and his rider, and far more adventure and variety than if I were riding. We never cease to be surprised when we see how swiftly the skater glides along. Just compare him with one walking or running. The walker is but a snail in comparison, and the runner gives up the contest after a few rods. The skater can afford to follow all the windings of a stream, and yet soon leaves far behind and out of sight the walker who cuts across. Distance is hardly an obstacle to him. . . . The skater has wings, talaria to his feet. Moreover, you have such perfect control of your feet that you can take advantage of the narrowest and most winding and sloping bridge of ice in order to pass between the button bushes and the open stream, or under a bridge on a narrow shelf where the walker cannot go at all. You can glide securely within an inch of destruction on this, the most slippery of

surfaces, more securely than you could walk there perhaps on any other material. You can pursue swiftly the most intricate and winding path, even leaping obstacles that suddenly present themselves. . . .

H—— H—— was fishing a quarter of a mile this side of Hubbard's Bridge. He had caught a pickerel . . . twenty-six inches long, . . . a very handsome fish. Dark brown above, yellow and brown on the side, becoming at length almost a clear golden yellow low down, with a white abdomen and reddish fins. They are handsome fellows, both the pikes in the water and the tigers in the jungle. What tragedies are enacted under this dumb, icy platform in the fields! What an anxious and adventurous life the small fishes must live, liable at any moment to be swallowed by the larger! No fish of moderate size can go stealing along safely in any part of the stream, but suddenly there may come rushing out from this jungle or that some greedy monster and gulp him down. Parent fishes, if they care for their offspring, how can they trust them abroad out of their sight!

It takes so many fishes a week to fill the maw of this large one. And the large ones! H—— H—— and company are lying in wait for them.

Dec. 29, 1859. Very cold morning. About

15°— at 8 A. M. at our door. I went to the river immediately after sunrise; could see a little greenness in the ice, and also a little rose color from the snow, but far less than before sunset. Do both these phenomena then require a gross atmosphere? Apparently the ice is greenest when the sun is twenty or thirty minutes above the horizon.

From [a] smooth open place . . . a great deal of vapor was rising, to the height of a dozen feet or more, as from a boiling kettle. This, then, is a phenomenon of quite cold weather. I did not notice it yesterday P. M. These open places are a sort of breathing holes of the river. . . . Just as cold weather reveals the breath of a man, still greater cold reveals the breath of, *i. e.*, warm, moist air over, the river. . . . P. M. . . . When I went to walk it was about 10° above zero, and when I returned 1°+. I did not notice any vapor rising from the open places as I did in the morning when it was 16°— and also when it was 6°—. . . . When the air is, say 4° or 5° below zero, the water being 32°+, then there is a visible evaporation. Is there the same difference, or some 40° between the heat of the human breath and that of the air in which the moisture in the breath becomes visible in vapor. This has to do with the dew point. — Next, what makes the water of those open places thus warm? and is it

any warmer than elsewhere? There is considerable heat reflected from a sandy bottom where the water is shallow, and at these places it is always sandy and shallow, but I doubt if this actually makes the water warmer, though it may melt the more opaque ice which absorbs it. The fact that Holt bend, which is deep, is late to freeze, being narrow, seems to prove it to be the swiftness of the water, and not reflected heat that prevents freezing. The water is apparently kept warm under the ice and down next to the unfrozen earth, and by a myriad springs from within the bowels of the earth.

Dec. 30, 1840. . . . Our Golden Age must after all be a pastoral one; we would be simple men in ignorance, and not accomplished in wisdom. We want great peasants more than great heroes. The sun would shine along the highway to some purpose, if we would unlearn our wisdom and practice illiterate truth henceforth. . . . Let us grow to the full stature of our humbleness ere we aspire to be greater. — It is great praise in the poet [Virgil] to have made husbandry famous.

"In the cool spring, when cool moisture from the hoary mountains flows,
And the mouldering clod is dissolved by the zephyr,
Then straightway let the bull with deep-pressed plow begin
To groan, and the share, worn by the furrow, to shine."

Georg. i. 43.

And again when the husbandman conducts water down the slope to restore his thirsty crops,

"That, falling, makes a hoarse murmur among the smooth rocks, and tempers the parching fields with its bubbling streams." — *Ibid.* 109.

Describing the end of the Golden Age and the commencement of the reign of Jupiter, he says:

"He shook honey from the leaves, and removed fire,
And stayed the wine everywhere flowing in rivers
That experience, by meditating, might invent various arts
By degrees, and seek the blade of corn in furrows,
And strike out hidden fire from the veins of the flint."

Ibid. 131.

Dec. 30, 1841. . . .

Within the circuit of this plodding life
There are moments of an azure hue,
And as unpolluted, fair, as is the violet
Or anemone, when the spring strews them
By some south wood side; which make untrue
The best philosophy which has so poor an aim
But to console man for his grievance here.
I have remembered, when the winter came,
High in my chamber, in the frosty nights,
How, in the summer past, some
Unrecorded beam slanted across
Some upland pasture where the Johnswort grew,
Or heard, amidst the verdure of my mind,
The bee's long smothered hum;
So, by the cheap economy of God,
Made rich to go upon my wintry work again.

. . . . . .

When the snow is falling thick and fast, the flakes nearest you seem to be driving straight to the ground, while the more distant seem to

float in the air in a quivering bank, like feathers, or like birds at play, and not as if sent on any errand. So, at a little distance, all the works of nature proceed with sport and frolic. They are more in the eye, and less in the deed.

Dec. 30, 1851. . . . This afternoon, being on Fair Haven Hill, I heard the sound of a saw, and soon after from the cliff saw two men sawing down a noble pine beneath, about forty rods off, . . . the last of a dozen or more which were left when the forest was cut, and for fifteen years have waved in solitary majesty over the sproutland. I saw them like beavers or insects gnawing at the trunk of this noble tree, the diminutive manikins with their cross-cut saw which could scarcely span it. It towered up a hundred feet, as I afterwards found by measurement, one of the tallest probably in the township, and straight as an arrow, but slanting a little toward the hillside, its top seen against the frozen river and the hill of Conantum. I watch closely to see when it begins to move. Now the sawers stop, and with an axe open it a little on the side toward which it leans, that it may break the faster, and now their saw goes again. Now surely it is going; it is inclined one quarter of the quadrant, and breathless I expect its crashing fall. But no, I was mistaken. It has not moved an inch. It stands at the same

angle as at first. It is fifteen minutes yet to its fall. Still its branches wave in the wind as if it were destined to stand for a century, and the wind soughs through its needles as of yore; it is still a forest tree, the most majestic tree that waves over Musketaquid. The silvery sheen of the sunlight is reflected from its needles, it still affords an inaccessible crotch for the squirrel's nest, not a lichen has forsaken its mast-like stem, its raking mast; the hill is the hulk. Now, now is the moment, the manikins at its base are fleeing from their crime. They have dropped the guilty saw and axe. How slowly and majestically it starts, as if it were only swayed by a summer breeze, and would return without a sigh to its location in the air, and now it fans the hillside with its fall, and lies down to its bed in the valley from which it is never to rise, as softly as a feather, folding its green mantle about it like a warrior, as if, tired of standing, it embraced the earth with silent joy, returning its elements to the dust again. But, hark! . . . you only saw, you did not hear. There now comes up a deafening crash to these rocks, advertising you that even trees do not die without a groan. . . . I went down and measured it. It was four feet in diameter where it was sawed, and about a hundred feet long. Before I had reached it, the axemen had

already half divested it of its branches. Its gracefully spreading top was a perfect wreck on the hillside, as if it had been made of glass, and the tender cones of one year's growth upon its summit appealed in vain and too late to the mercy of the chopper. Already he has measured it with his axe, and marked off the small logs it will make. It is lumber. . . . When the fish hawk in the spring revisits the banks of the Musketaquid, he will circle in vain to find his accustomed perch, and the hen hawk will mourn for the pines lofty enough to protect her brood. . . . I hear no knell tolled, I see no procession of mourners in the streets or the woodland aisles. The squirrel has leaped to another tree, the hawk has circled farther off, and has now settled upon a new eyrie, but the woodman is preparing to lay his axe at the root of that also.

Dec. 30, 1853. In winter every man is, to a slight extent, dormant, just as some animals are but partially awake, though not commonly classed with those that hibernate. The summer circulations are to some extent stopped, the range of his afternoon walk is somewhat narrower, he is more or less confined to the highway and woodpath; the weather oftener shuts him up in his burrow, he begins to feel the access of dormancy, and to assume the spherical form of the marmot, the nights are longest, he

is often satisfied if he only gets to the post office in the course of the day. The arctic voyagers are obliged to invent and willfully engage in active amusements to keep themselves awake and alive. . . . Even our experience is some thing like wintering in the pack.

Dec. 30, 1856. What an evidence it is, after all, of civilization, or of a capacity for improvement, that savages like our Indians, who, in their protracted wars, stealthily slay men, women, and children without mercy, with intense pleasure, who delight to burn, torture, and devour one another, proving themselves more inhuman in these respects even than beasts, what a wonderful evidence it is, I say, of their capacity for improvement, that even they can enter into the most formal compact or treaty of peace, burying the hatchet, etc., and treating with each other with as much consideration as the most enlightened states. You would say that they had a genius for diplomacy as well as for war. — Consider that Iroquois, torturing his captive, roasting him before a slow fire, biting off the fingers of him alive, and finally eating the heart of him dead, betraying not the slightest evidence of humanity, and now behold him in the council chamber where he meets the representatives of the hostile nation to treat of peace, conducting with such perfect dignity and decorum, betraying

such a sense of justice. These savages are equal to us civilized men in their treaties, and I fear not essentially worse in their wars.

Dec. 30, 1859. . . . P. M. Going by D——'s I see a shrike perched on the tip top of the topmost, upright twig of an English cherry-tree before his house, standing square on the topmost bud, balancing himself by a slight motion of his tail from time to time. I have noticed this habit of the bird before. You would suppose it inconvenient for so large a bird to maintain its footing there. Scared by my passing in the road he flew off, and I thought I would see if he alighted in a similar place. He flew toward a young elm, whose higher twigs were much more slender, though not quite so upright as those of the cherry, and I thought he might be excused if he alighted on the side of one; but no, to my surprise, he alighted without any trouble upon the very top of one of the highest of all, and looked around as before. . . .

What a different phenomenon a muskrat now from what it is in summer. Now, if one floats or swims, its whole back out, or crawls out upon the ice at one of those narrow oval water spaces, some twenty rods long (in calm weather, smooth mirrors), in a broad frame of white ice or yet whiter snow, it is seen at once, as conspicuous (or more so) as a fly on a window-pane or a

mirror. But in summer, how many hundreds crawl along the weedy shore, or plunge in the long river unsuspected by the boatman!

Dec. 30, 1860. . . . It is remarkable how universally, as respects soil and exposure, the whortleberry family is distributed with us. One kind or another flourishes in every soil and locality. The Pennsylvania and Canada blueberries especially in elevated, cool, and airy places, on hills and mountains, in openings in the woods and in sproutlands, the high blueberry in swamps, and the low blueberry in intermediate places, or almost anywhere but in swamps hereabouts. The family thus ranges from the highest mountain tops to the lowest swamps, and forms the prevailing shrub of a great part of New England. Not only is this true of the family, but hereabouts of the genus, *Gaylussacia*, or the huckleberry proper, alone. I do not know of a spot where any shrub grows in this neighborhood, but one or another species or variety of the *Gaylussacia* may also grow there. . . . Such care has nature taken to furnish to birds and quadrupeds, and to men, a palatable berry of this kind, slightly modified by soil and climate, wherever the consumer may chance to be. Corn and potatoes, apples and pears have comparatively a narrow range, but we can fill our basket with whortleberries on the summit

of Mt. Washington, above almost all the shrubs with which we are familiar, the same kind which they have in Greenland, and again, when we get home, in the lowest swamps, with a kind which the Greenlander never found. — First, there is the early, dwarf blueberry, the smallest of the whortleberry shrubs, the first to ripen its fruit, not commonly erect, but more or less reclined, often covering the earth with a sort of dense matting. The twigs are green, the flowers commonly white. Both the shrub and its fruit are the most tender and delicate of any that we have. The *Vaccinium Canadense* may be considered a more northern form of the same. — Some ten days later comes the high blueberry, or swamp blueberry, the commonest stout shrub of our swamps, of which I have been obliged to cut down not a few, when running lines in surveying through the low woods. They are a pretty sure indication of water, and when I see their dense curving tops ahead, I prepare to wade or for a wet foot. The flowers have an agreeable, sweet, and very promising fragrance, and a handful of them plucked and eaten have a subacid taste agreeable to some palates. — At the same time with the last, the common low blueberry is ripe. This is an upright slender shrub, with a few long, wand-like branches, with green bark and glaucous green leaves, its

recent shoots crimson-colored. The flowers have a considerably rosy tinge, a delicate tint. The last two kinds are more densely flowered than the others. — The huckleberry is an upright shrub, more or less stout according to its exposure to the sun and air, with a spreading, bushy top, a dark brown bark and thick leaves, the recent shoots red. The flowers are much more red than those of the others.

As in old times they who dwelt on the heath, remote from towns, were backward to adopt the doctrines which prevailed there, and were therefore called heathen, so we dwellers in the huckleberry pastures, which are our heathlands, are slow to adopt the notions of large towns and cities, and may perchance be nicknamed huckleberry people. But the worst of it is that the emissaries of the towns care more for our berries than we for their doctrines. In those days the very race had got a bad name, and *ethnicus* was only another name for heathen.

All our hills are or have been huckleberry hills, — the three hills of Boston, and no doubt Bunker Hill among the rest.

In May and June all our hills and fields are adorned with a profusion of the pretty little, more or less bell-shaped flowers of this family, commonly turned toward the earth, and more or less tinged with red or pink, and resounding

with the hum of insects, each one the forerunner of a berry the most natural, wholesome, and palatable that the soil can produce. — The early low blueberry, which I will call "bluet," adopting the name from the Canadians, is probably the prevailing kind of whortleberry in New England, for the high blueberry and huckleberry are unknown in many sections.

In many New Hampshire towns, a neighboring mountain top is the common berry field of many villages, and in the season such a summit will be swarming with pickers. A hundred at once will rush thither from the surrounding villages, with pails and buckets of all descriptions, especially on a Sunday, which is their leisure day. When camping on such ground, thinking myself out of the world, I have had my solitude very unexpectedly interrupted by such a company, and found that week days were the only Sabbath days there. . . . The mountain tops of New Hampshire, often lifted above the clouds, are thus covered with this beautiful blue fruit in greater profusion than any garden.

What though the woods be cut down. This emergency was long ago foreseen and provided for by nature, and the interregnum is not allowed to be a barren one. She is full of resources, and not only begins instantly to heal that scar, but she consoles and refreshes us with fruits

such as the forest did not produce. . . . As the sandal wood is said to diffuse its perfume around the woodman who cuts it, so, in this case, Nature rewards with unexpected fruits the hand that lays her waste.

Dec. 31, 1837. As the least drop of wine tinges the whole goblet, so the least particle of truth colors our whole life. It is never isolated, or simply added as treasure to our stock. When any real progress is made, we unlearn and learn anew what we thought we knew before.

Dec. 31, 1840. . . . There must be respiration as well as aspiration. We should not walk on tiptoe, but healthily expand to our full circumference on the soles of our feet. . . . If aspiration be repeated long without respiration, it will be no better than expiration, or simply losing one's breath. In the healthy, for every aspiration there will be a respiration which is to make his idea take shape, and give its tone to the character. Every time he steps buoyantly up, he steps solidly down again, and stands the firmer on the ground for his independence of it. We should fetch the whole heel, sole, and toe horizontally down to earth. Let not ours be a wiped virtue, as men go about with an array of clean linen, but unwashed as a fresh flower, not a clean Sunday garment, but better as a soiled week-day one.

Dec. 31, 1850. . . . The blue jays evidently notify each other of the presence of an intruder, and will sometimes make a great chattering about it, and so communicate the alarm to other birds, and to beasts.

Dec. 31, 1851. The third warm day; now overcast and beginning to drizzle. Still it is inspiriting as the brightest weather, though the sun surely is not going to shine. There is a latent light in the mist, as if there were more electricity than usual in the air. There are warm, foggy days in winter which excite us. — It reminds me, this thick, spring-like weather, that I have not enough valued and attended to the pure clarity and brilliancy of the winter skies. . . . Shall I ever in summer evenings see so celestial a reach of blue sky contrasting with amber as I saw a few days since. The day sky in winter corresponds for clarity to the night sky in which the stars shine and twinkle so brightly in this latitude.

I am too late, perhaps, to see the sand foliage in the deep cut; should have been there day before yesterday. It is now too wet and soft. Yet in some places it is perfect. I see some perfect leopard's paws. These things suggest that there is motion in the earth as well as on the surface; it lives and grows. . . . I seem to see some of the life that is in the spring bud

and blossom, more intimately, nearer its fountain head, the fancy sketches and designs of the artist. It is more simple and primitive growth; as if for ages sand and clay might have thus flowed into the forms of foliage, before plants were produced to clothe the earth. . . .

I observed this afternoon the old Irish woman at the shanty in the woods, sitting out on the hillside bare-headed in the rain, and on the icy, though thawing ground, knitting. She comes out like the ground squirrel, at the least intimation of warmer weather, while I walk still in a great coat, and under an umbrella. She will not have to go far to be buried, so close she lives to the earth. Such Irish as these are naturalizing themselves at a rapid rate, and threaten at last to displace the Yankees, as the latter have the Indians. The process of acclimation is rapid with them. They draw long breaths in the American sick-room. . . . There is a low mist in the woods. It is a good day to study lichens. The view so confined, it compels your attention to near objects, and the white background reveals the disks of the lichens distinctly. They appear more loose, flowing, expanded, flattened out, the colors brighter for the damp. The round, greenish-yellow lichens on the white pines loom through the mist (or are seen dimly) like shields whose devices you

would fain read. The trees appear all at once covered with the crop of lichens and mosses of all kinds. . . . This is their solstice, and your eyes run swiftly through the mist to these things only. On every fallen twig even, that has lain under the snows, as well as on the trees, they appear erect, and now first to have attained their full expansion. Nature has a day for each of her creations. To-day it is an exhibition of lichens at Forest Hall. The livid green of some, the fruit of others, they eclipse the trees they cover; the red, club-shaped (baobab tree-like), on the stumps, the erythrean stumps; ah, beautiful is decay. True, as Thales said, the world was made out of water. That is the principle of all things.

I do not lay myself open to my friends? The owner of the casket locks it and unlocks it. — Treat your friends for what you know them to be. Regard no surfaces. Consider not what they did but what they intended. Be sure, as you know them, you are known of them again. Last night I treated my dearest friend ill. Though I could find some excuse for myself, it is not such excuse as under the circumstances could be pleaded in so many words. Instantly, I blamed myself, and sought an opportunity to make atonement, but the friend avoided me, and with kinder feelings even than before I was obliged

to depart. And now this morning I feel that it is too late to speak of the trifle, and besides I doubt now, in the cool morning, if I have a right to suppose such intimate and serious relations as afford a basis for the apology I had conceived, for even magnanimity must ask this poor earth for a field. The virtues even wait for invitation. Yet I am resolved to know that one centrally, through thick and thin, and though we should be cold to one another, though we should never speak to one another, I will know that inward and essential love may exist under a superficial coldness, and that the laws of attraction speak louder than words. My true relation this instant shall be my apology for my false relation the last instant. I made haste to cast off my injustice as scurf. I own it less than another. I have absolutely done with it. Let the idle and wavering and apologizing friend appropriate it. Methinks our estrangement is only like the divergence of the branches which unite in the stem.

To-night I heard Mrs. —— lecture on womanhood. The most important fact about the lecture was that a woman gave it, and in that respect it was suggestive. Went to see her afterward. But the interview added nothing to the impression, rather subtracted from it. She was a woman in the too common sense, after all

You had to fire small charges. I did not have a finger in once, for fear of blowing away all her works, and so ending the game. You had to substitute courtesy for sense and argument. It requires nothing less than a chivalric feeling to sustain a conversation with a lady. I carried her lecture for her in my pocket wrapped in her handkerchief. My pocket exhales cologne to this moment. The championess of woman's rights still asks you to be a ladies' man. I can't fire a salute for fear some of the guns may be shotted. I had to unshot all the guns in truth's battery, and fire powder and wadding only. Certainly the heart is only for rare occasions; the intellect affords the most unfailing entertainment. It would only do to let her feel the wind of the ball. I fear that to the last, women's lectures will demand mainly courtesy from men. . . .

Denuded pines stand in the clearings with no old cloak to wrap about them, only the apexes of their cones entire, telling a pathetic story of the companions that clothed them. So stands a man. His clearing around him, he has no companions on the hills. The lonely traveler, looking up, wonders why he was left when his companions were taken.

Dec. 31, 1853. . . . It is a remarkable sight, this snow-clad landscape, the fences and bushes half-buried, and the warm sun on it. . . . The

town and country is now so still, no rattle of wagons nor even jingle of sleigh bells, every tread being as with woolen feet. . . . In such a day as this, the crowing of a cock is heard very far and distinctly. . . . There are a few sounds still which never fail to affect me, the notes of a wood thrush and the sound of a vibrating chord. These affect me as many sounds once did often, and as almost all should. The strains of the æolian harp and of the wood thrush are the truest and loftiest preachers that I know now left on this earth. I know of no missionaries to us heathen comparable to them. They, as it were, lift us up in spite of ourselves. They intoxicate and charm us. Where was that strain mixed, into which this world was dropped, but as a lump of sugar, to sweeten the draught? I would be drunk, drunk, drunk, dead drunk to this world with it forever. He that hath ears, let him hear. The contact of sound with a human ear whose hearing is pure and unimpaired is coincident with an ecstasy. Sugar is not so sweet to the palate as sound to a healthy ear. The hearing of it makes men brave. . . . These things alone remind me of my immortality, which is else a fable. As I hear, I realize and see clearly what at other times I only dimly remember. I get the value of the earth's extent and the sky's depth. It . . . gives me the

freedom of all bodies, of all nature. I leave my body in a trance, and accompany the zephyr and the fragrance.

Walden froze completely over last night. It is, however, all snow-ice, as it froze while it was snowing hard. It looks like frozen yeast somewhat. I waded about in the woods through the snow, which certainly averaged considerably more than two feet deep where I went. . . . Saw probably an otter's track, very broad and deep, as if a log had been drawn along. It was nearly as obvious as a man's track; made before last night's snow fell. The creature from time to time went beneath the snow for a few feet to the leaves. This animal I should probably never see the least trace of were it not for the snow, the great revealer.

I saw some squirrels' nests of oak leaves high in the trees, and directly after a gray squirrel tripping along the branches of an oak and shaking down the snow. He ran down the oak on the side opposite from me over the snow and up another tall and slender oak, also on the side opposite from me which was bare, and leaped down about four feet into a white pine, and then ran up still higher into its thick green top and clung behind the main stem, perfectly still. . . . This he did to conceal himself, though obliged to come nearer to me to accomplish it.

His fore feet make but one track in the snow, about three inches broad, and his hind feet another similar one, a foot or more distant, and there are two sharp furrows forward, and two slighter ones backward from each track. This track he makes when running, but I am not absolutely certain that all the four feet do not come together. There were many holes in the snow where he had gone down to the leaves and brought up acorns, which he had eaten on the nearest twig, dropping fine bits of shell about on the snow, and also bits of lichen and bark. I noticed the bits of acorn shells, etc., by the holes in many places. At times he made a continuous narrow trail in the snow, somewhat like a small muskrat, where he had walked or gone several times, and he would go under a few feet and come out again.

Dec. 31, 1854. P. M. On river to Fair Haven Pond. A beautiful, clear, not very cold day. The shadows on the snow are indigo blue. The pines look very dark. The white-oak leaves are a cinnamon color, the black and red (?) oak leaves a reddish-brown or leather color. . . . A partridge rises from the alders and skims across the river at its widest part, just before me; a fine sight. . . . How glorious the perfect stillness and peace of the winter landscape.

Dec. 31, 1859. . . . How vain to try to

teach youth or anybody truths. They can only learn them after their own fashion, and when they get ready. I do not mean by this to condemn our system of education, but to show what it amounts to. A hundred boys at college are drilled in physics, metaphysics, languages, etc. There may be one or two in each hundred, prematurely old, perchance, who approach the subject from a similar point of view to their teachers', but as for the rest and the most promising, it is like agricultural chemistry to so many Indians. They get a valuable drilling, it may be, but they do not learn what you profess to teach. They at most only learn where the arsenal is, in case they should ever want to use any of its weapons. The young men, being young, necessarily listen to the lecturer on history, just as they do to the singing of a bird. They expect to be affected by something he may say. It is a kind of poetic pabulum and imagery that they get. Nothing comes quite amiss to their mill.

Jan. 1, 1841. All, men and women, woo one. There is a fragrance in their breath.

"Nosque — equis oriens afflavit anhelis."

And if now they hate, I muse as in sombre, cloudy weather, not despairing of the absent ray.

"Illic sera rubens accendit lumina vesper."

Jan. 1, 1842. . . . The virtuous soul possesses a fortitude and hardihood which not the grenadier nor pioneer can match. It never shrinks. It goes singing to its work. Effort is its relaxation. The rude pioneer work of the world has been done by the most devoted worshipers of beauty. . . . In winter is their campaign. They never go into quarters. They are elastic under the heaviest burden, under the extremest physical suffering.

Jan. 1, 1852. . . . I have observed that one mood is the natural critic of another. When possessed with a strong feeling on any subject foreign to the one I may be writing on, I know very well what of good and what of bad I have written on the latter. It looks to me now as it will ten years hence. My life is then earnest, and will tolerate no makeshifts nor nonsense. What is tinsel, or euphuism, or irrelevant is revealed to such a touchstone. In the light of a strong feeling all things take their places, and truth of every kind is seen as such. Now let me read my verses, and I will tell you if the god has had a hand in them. I wish to survey my composition for a moment from the least favorable point of view. I wish to be translated to the future, and look at my work as it were at a structure on the plain, to observe what portions have crumbled under the influence of the elements.

9.30 P. M. To Fair Haven. Moon little more than half full. Not a cloud in the sky. It is a remarkably warm night for the season, the ground almost entirely bare. The stars are dazzlingly bright. The fault may be in my own barrenness, but methinks there is a certain poverty about the winter night's sky. The stars of higher magnitude are more bright and dazzling, and therefore appear more near and numerable; while those that appear indistinct and infinitely remote in the summer, giving the impression of unfathomableness in the sky, are scarcely seen at all. The front halls of heaven are so brilliantly lighted that they quite eclipse the more remote. The sky has fallen many degrees.

The worst kind of tick to get under your skin is yourself in an irritable mood. . . . These are some of the differences between this and the autumn or summer night: the stiffened glebe under my feet, the dazzle and seeming nearness of the stars, the duller gleam from ice on rivers and ponds, the white spots in the fields and streaks by the wall sides where are the remains of drifts yet unmelted. Perhaps the only thing that spoke to me in this walk was the bare, lichen-covered, gray rock at the cliff, in the moonlight, naked and almost warm as in summer.

I have so much faith in the power of truth to

communicate itself that I should not believe a friend, if he should tell me that he had given credit to an unjust rumor concerning me. Suspect! Ah, yes, you may suspect a thousand things, but I well know that what you suspect most confidently of all is just the truth. Your other doubts but flavor this your main suspicion. They are the condiments which, taken alone, do simply bite the tongue. . . .

Jan. 1, 1853. This morning we have something between ice and frost on the trees, etc. The rocks cased in ice look like alum rocks. This, not frozen mist or frost, but frozen drizzle, collected around the slightest cores, gives prominence to the least withered herbs and grasses. Where yesterday was a plain, smooth field, appears now a teeming crop of fat, icy herbage. The stems of the herbs on the north side are enlarged from ten to one hundred times. The addition is so universally on the north side that a traveler could not lose the points of the compass to-day, though it should be never so dark; for every blade of grass would serve to guide him, telling from which side the storm came yesterday. These straight stems of grasses stand up like white batons, or sceptres, and make a conspicuous foreground to the landscape, from six inches to three feet high. C. thought that these fat, icy branches on the withered grass and

herbs had no nucleus, but looking closer I showed him the fine, black, wiry threads on which they impinged, which made him laugh with surprise. . . . The clover and sorrel send up a dull, green gleam through this icy coat, like strange plants. . . . Some weeds bear the ice in masses; some, like the trumpet weed and tansy, in balls for each dried flower. What a crash of jewels as you walk! The most careless walker, who never deigned to look at these humble weeds before, cannot help observing them now. This is why the herbage is left to stand dry in the fields all winter. Upon a solid foundation of ice stand out, pointing in all directions between N. W. and N. E., or within the limits of 90°, little spicula, or crystallized points, half an inch, or more, in length. Upon the dark, glazed, plowed ground, where a mere wiry stem rises, its north side is thickly clad with these snow-white spears, like some Indian head-dress, as if it had attracted all the frost. I saw a prinos bush full of large berries by the wall in Hubbard's field. Standing on the west side, the contrast of the red berries with their white incrustation or prolongation on the north was admirable. I thought I had never seen the berries so dazzlingly bright. The whole north side of the bush, berries and stock, was beautifully incrusted, and when I went round to

the north side the redness of the berries came softened through, and tingeing the allied snow-white bush, like an evening sky beyond. These adjoined snow or ice berries, being beset within the limits of 90° on the N. with those icy particles or spicula, between which the red glow, and sometimes the clear red itself, was sometimes visible, produced the appearance of a raspberry bush full of over-ripe fruit.

Standing on the north side of a bush or tree, looking against the sky, you see only the white ghost of a tree, without a mote of earthiness; but as you go round it, the dark core comes into view. It makes all the odds imaginable whether you are traveling N. or S. The drooping birches along the edges of woods are the most feathery, fairy-like ostrich plumes, and the color of their trunks increases the delusion. The weight of the ice gives to the pines the forms which northern trees, like the firs, constantly wear, bending and twisting the branches; for the twigs and plumes of the pines, being frozen, remain as the wind held them, and new portions of the trunk are exposed. Seen from the N. there is no greenness in the pines, and the character of the tree is changed. The willows along the edge of the river look like sedge in the meadows. The sky is overcast, and a fine snowy hail and rain is falling, and these ghost-like trees make a scen-

ery which reminds you of Spitzbergen. I see now the beauty of the causeway by the bridge, alders below swelling into the road, overtopped by willows and maples. The fine grasses and shrubs in the meadow rise to meet and mingle with the drooping willows, and the whole makes an indistinct impression like a mist. Through all this, the road runs toward those white, ice-clad, ghostly or fairy trees in the distance, toward spirit-land. The pines are as white as a counterpane, with raised embroidery and white tassels and fringes. Each fascicle of leaves or needles is held apart by an icy club surmounted by a little snowy or icy ball. Finer than the Saxon arch is this path running under the pines, roofed not with crossing boughs, but drooping, ice-covered, irregular twigs. In the midst of this stately pine, towering like the solemn ghost of a tree, I see the white, ice-clad boughs of other trees appearing, of a different character; sometimes oaks with leaves incrusted, or fine-sprayed maples or walnuts. But finer than all, this red oak, its leaves incrusted like shields a quarter of an inch thick, and a thousand fine spicula like long serrations at right angles with their planes upon the edges. It produces an indescribably rich effect, the color of the leaf coming softened through the ice, a delicate fawn of many shades. Where the plumes of the pitch

pine are short and spreading close to the trunk, sometimes perfect cups or rays are formed. Pitch pines present rough, massy grenadier plumes, each having a darker spot or cavity in the end where you look in to the bud. I listen to the booming of the pond as if it were a reasonable creature. I return at last in the rain, and am coated with a glaze, like the fields. . . .

After talking with uncle Charles, the other night, about the worthies of this country, Webster and the rest, as usual, considering who were geniuses and who not, I showed him up to bed; and when I had got into bed myself I heard the chamber door opened, after eleven o'clock, and he called out in an earnest, stentorian voice, loud enough to wake the whole house, "Henry! was John Quincy Adams a genius?" "No, I think not," was my reply. "Well, I did n't think he was," answered he.

Jan. 1, 1854. Le Jeune, referring to the death of a young Frenchwoman who had devoted her life to the savages of Canada, uses this expression: "Finally this beautiful soul detached itself from its body the 15th of March," etc.

The drifts mark the standstill or equilibrium between the currents of air or particular winds. In our greatest snow-storms, the wind being northerly, the greatest drifts are on the south

side of houses and fences. . . . I notice that in the angle made by our house and shed, a S. W. exposure, the snow-drift does not lie close about the pump, but is a foot off, forming a circular bowl, showing that there was an eddy about it. The snow is like a mould, showing the form of the eddying currents of air which have been impressed on it, while the drift and all the rest is that which fell between the currents or where they counterbalanced each other. These boundary lines are mountain barriers.

The white-in-tails, or grass finches, linger pretty late, flitting in flocks. They come only so near winter as the white in their tails indicates. . . .

The snow buntings and the tree sparrows are the true spirits of the snow-storm. They are the animated beings that ride upon it and have their life in it.

The snow is the great betrayer. It not only shows the track of mice, otters, etc., etc., which else we should rarely, if ever, see, but the tree sparrows are more plainly seen against its white ground, and they in turn are attracted by the dark weeds it reveals. It also drives the crows and other birds out of the woods to the villages for food. We might expect to find in the snow the footprint of a life superior to our own, of which no zoölogy takes cognizance. Is there no

trace of a nobler life than that of an otter or an escaped convict to be looked for in it? Shall we suppose that is the only life that has been abroad in the night? It is only the savage that can see the track of no higher life than an otter's. Why do the vast snow plains give us pleasure, the twilight of the bent and half-buried woods? Is not all there consonant with virtue, justice, purity, courage, magnanimity; and does not all this amount to the track of a higher life than the otter's, — a life which has not gone by and left a footprint merely, but is there with its beauty, its music, its perfume, its sweetness, to exhilarate and recreate us? All that we perceive is the impress of its spirit. If there is a perfect government of the world according to the highest laws, do we find no trace of intelligence there, whether in the snow, or the earth, or in ourselves, — no other trail but such as a dog can scent? Is there none which an angel can detect and follow, — none to guide a man in his pilgrimage, which water will not conceal? Is there no odor of sanctity to be perceived? Is its trail too old? Have mortals lost the scent? . . . Are there not hunters who seek for something higher than foxes, with judgment more discriminating than the senses of fox-hounds, who rally to a nobler music than that of the hunting-horn? As there is contention among the fishermen who

shall be the first to reach the pond as soon as the ice will bear, in spite of the cold; as the hunters are forward to take the field as soon as the first snow has fallen, so he who would make the most of his life for discipline must be abroad early and late, in spite of cold and wet, in pursuit of nobler game, whose traces are there most distinct, — a life which we seek not to destroy, but to make our own; which when pursued does not earth itself, does not burrow downward, but upward, takes not to the trees, but to the heavens, as its home; which the hunter pursues with winged thoughts and aspirations (these the dogs that tree it), rallying his pack with the bugle notes of undying faith. . . . Do the Indian and hunter only need snow-shoes, while the saint sits indoors in embroidered slippers?

Jan. 1, 1856. . . . P. M. To Walden. . . . On the ice at Walden are very beautiful large leaf crystals in great profusion. The ice is frequently thickly covered with them for many rods. They seem to be connected with the rosettes, a running together of them, look like a loose bunch of small white feathers springing from a tuft of down, for their shafts are lost in a tuft of fine snow like the down about the shaft of a feather, as if a feather bed had been shaken over the ice. They are, on a close examination, surprisingly perfect leaves, like ferns, only very

broad for their length, and commonly more on one side the midrib than the other. They are from an inch to an inch and a half long, and three fourths of an inch wide, and slanted, where I look, from the S. W. They have first a very distinct midrib, though so thin that they cannot be taken up; then distinct ribs branching from this, commonly opposite; and minute ribs springing again from these last, as in many ferns, the last running to each crenation in the border. How much farther they are subdivided the naked eye cannot discern. They are so thin and fragile that they melt under your breath while you are looking closely at them. A fisherman says they were much finer in the morning. In other places the ice is strewn with a different kind of frost-work, in little patches, as if oats had been spilled, like fibres of asbestos rolled, one half or three fourths of an inch long and one eighth or more wide. Here and there patches of them a foot or two over, like some boreal grain spilled.

Jan. 1, 1858. . . . I have lately been surveying the Walden woods so extensively and minutely that I can see it mapped in my mind's eye as so many men's wood-lots, and am aware when I walk there that I am at a given moment passing from such a one's wood-lot to such another's. I fear this particular dry knowledge

may affect my imagination and fancy, that it will not be easy to see so much wildness and native vigor there as formerly. No thicket will seem so unexplored now that I know a stake and stones may be found in it.

In these respects those Maine woods differ essentially from ours. There you are never reminded that the wilderness you are treading is after all some villager's familiar wood-lot, from which his ancestors have sledded their fuel for a generation or two, or some widow's thirds, minutely described in some old deed which is recorded, of which the owner has got a plan too, and of which the old boundmarks may be found every forty rods, if you will search.

What a history this Concord wilderness, which I affect so much, may have had! How many old deeds describe it, some particular wild spot, how it passed from Cole to Robinson, and Robinson to Jones, and from Jones finally to Smith in course of years. Some had cut it over three times during their lives, built walls and made a pasture of it perchance, and some burned it and sowed it with rye. . . .

In the Maine woods you are not reminded of these things. 'T is true the map informs you that you stand on land granted by the State to such an academy, or on Bingham's purchase; but these names do not impose on you, for you

see nothing to remind you of the academy or of Bingham.

Jan. 2, 1841. . . . Every needle of the white pine trembles distinctly in the breeze, which on the sunny side gives the whole tree a shimmering, seething aspect. . . .

I stopped short in the path to-day to admire how the trees grow up without forethought, regardless of the time and circumstances. They do not wait, as men do. Now is the golden age of the sapling; earth, air, sun, and rain are occasion enough.

They were no better in primeval centuries. "The winter of" their "discontent" never comes. Witness the buds of the native poplar, standing gayly out to the frost, on the sides of its bare switches. They express a naked confidence.

With cheerful heart I could be a sojourner in the wilderness. I should be sure to find there the catkins of the alder. When I read of them in the accounts of northern adventurers by Baffin's Bay or Mackenzie's River, I see how even there too I could dwell. They are my little vegetable redeemers. Methinks my virtue will not flag ere they come again. They are worthy to have had a greater than Neptune or Ceres for their donor. Who was the benignant goddess that bestowed them on mankind?

I saw a fox run across the pond to-day with the carelessness of freedom. As at intervals I traced his course in the sunshine, as he trotted along the ridge of a hill on the crust, it seemed as if the sun never shone so proudly, sheer down on the hillside, and the winds and woods were hushed in sympathy. I gave up to him sun and earth as to their true proprietor. He did not go in the sunshine, but the sunshine seemed to follow him. There was a visible sympathy between him and it.

Jan. 2, 1842. The ringing of the church bell is a much more melodious sound than any that is heard within the church. All great values are thus public, and undulate like sound through the atmosphere. Wealth cannot purchase any great private solace or convenience. Riches are only the means of sociality. I will depend on the extravagance of my neighbors for my luxuries; they will take care to pamper me, if I will be overfed. The poor man, who sacrificed nothing for the gratification, seems to derive a safer and more natural enjoyment from his neighbor's extravagance than he does himself. It is a new natural product, from the contemplation of which he derives new vigor and solace as from a natural phenomenon.

In moments of quiet and leisure my thoughts are more apt to revert to some natural than to any human relation.

Chaucer's sincere sorrow in his latter days for the grossness of his earlier works, and that he "cannot recall and annul" what he had "written of the base and filthy love of men towards women, but alas, they are now continued from man to man," says he, "and I cannot do what I desire," is all very creditable to his character.

Jan. 2, 1853. 9 A. M. Down railroad to Cliffs. A clear day, a pure sky with cirrhi. In this clear air and bright sunlight, the ice-covered trees have a new beauty, especially the birches along under the edge of Warren's wood on each side of the railroad, bent quite to the ground in every kind of curve. At a distance, as you are approaching them endwise, they look like the white tents of Indians under the edge of the wood. The birch is thus remarkable, perhaps, from the feathery form of the tree, whose numerous small branches sustain so great weight, bending it to the ground; and, moreover, because, from the color of the bark, the core is less observable. The oaks not only are less pliant in the trunk, but have fewer and stiffer twigs and branches. The birches droop over in all directions, like ostrich feathers. Most wood paths are impassable now to a carriage, almost to a foot traveler, from the number of saplings and boughs bent over even to the ground in them. Both sides of the deep cut shine in the sun as if silver-plated,

and the fine spray of a myriad bushes on the edge of the bank sparkle like silver. The telegraph wire is coated to ten times its size, and looks like a slight fence scalloping along at a distance. . . . When we climb the bank at Stow's wood-lot and come upon the piles of freshly split white pine wood (for he is ruthlessly laying it waste), the transparent ice, like a thick varnish, beautifully exhibits the color of the clear, tender, yellowish wood, pumpkin pine (?), and its grain. We pick our way over a bed of pine boughs a foot or two deep, covering the ground, each twig and needle thickly incrusted with ice, one vast gelid mass, which our feet crunch, as if we were walking through the cellar of some confectioner to the gods. The invigorating scent of the recently cut pines refreshes us, if that is any atonement for this devastation. . . . Especially now do I notice the hips, barberries, and winter-berries for their red. The red or purplish catkins of the alders are interesting as a winter fruit, and also of the birch. But few birds about. Apparently their granaries are locked up in ice, with which the grasses and buds are coated. Even far in the horizon the pine tops are turned to fir or spruce by the weight of the ice bending them down, so that they look like a spruce swamp. No two trees wear the ice alike. The short plumes and needles

of the spruce make a very pretty and peculiar figure. I see some oaks in the distance, which, from their branches being curved and arched downward and massed, are turned into perfect elms, which suggests that this is the peculiarity of the elm. Few, if any, other trees are thus wisp-like, the branches gracefully drooping. I mean some slender red and white oaks which have been recently left in a clearing. Just apply a weight to the end of the boughs which will cause them to droop, and to each particular twig which will mass them together, and you have perfect elms. Seen at the right angle, each ice-incrusted blade of stubble shines like a prism with some color of the rainbow, intense blue, or violet, and red. The smooth field, clad the other day with a low wiry grass, is now converted into rough stubble land, where you walk with crunching feet. It is remarkable that the trees can ever recover from the burden which bends them to the ground. I should like to weigh a limb of this pitch pine. The character of the tree is changed. I have now passed the bars, and am approaching the Cliffs. The forms and variety of the ice are particularly rich here, there are so many low bushes and weeds before me as I ascend toward the sun, especially very small white pines almost merged in the ice-incrusted ground. All objects are to the eye polished

silver. It is a perfect land of faery. Le Jeune describes the same in Canada in 1636: "Nos grands bois ne paroissoient qu'une forest de cristal." . . . The bells are particularly sweet this morning. I hear more, methinks, than ever before. . . . Men obey their call and go to the stove-warmed church, though God exhibits himself to the walker in a frosted bush to-day as much as he did in a burning one to Moses of old. We build a fire on the Cliffs. When kicking to pieces a pine stump for the fat knots which alone would burn this icy day, at the risk of spoiling my boots, having looked in vain for a stone, I thought how convenient would be an Indian stone axe to batter it with. The bark of white birch, though covered with ice, burned well. We soon had a roaring fire of fat pine on a shelf of rock from which we overlooked the icy landscape. The sun, too, was melting the ice on the rocks, and the water was purling downwards in dark bubbles exactly like polly-wogs. What a good word is flame, expressing the form and soul of fire, lambent, with forked tongue! We lit a fire to see it, rather than to feel it, it is so rare a sight these days. It seems good to have our eyes ache once more with smoke. What a peculiar, indescribable color has this flame! — a reddish or lurid yellow, not so splendid or full of light as of life and heat.

These fat roots made much flame and a very black smoke, commencing where the flame left off, which cast fine flickering shadows on the rocks. There was some bluish-white smoke from the rotten part of the wood. Then there was the fine white ashes which farmers' wives sometimes use for pearlash.

Jan. 2, 1854. . . . The tints of the sunset sky are never purer and more ethereal than in the coldest winter days. This evening, though the colors are not brilliant, the sky is crystalline, and the pale fawn-tinged clouds are very beautiful. I wish to get on to a hill to look down on the winter landscape. We go about these days as if we were in fetters; we walk in the stocks, stepping into the holes made by our predecessors. . . . The team and driver have long since gone by, but I see the marks of his whiplash on the snow, its recoil; but, alas! these are not a complete tally of the strokes which fell upon the oxen's back. The unmerciful driver thought, perhaps, that no one saw him, but unwittingly he recorded each blow on the unspotted snow behind his back as in a book of life. To more searching eyes the marks of his lash are in the air. I paced partly through the pitch-pine wood, and partly the open field from the turnpike by the Lee place to the railroad from N. to S., more than one fourth of a mile, meas-

uring at every ten paces. The average of sixty-five measurements up hill and down was nineteen inches. This, after increasing those in the woods by one inch (little enough), on account of the snow on the pines. . . . I think one would have to pace a mile on a N. and S. line, up and down hill, through woods and fields, to get a quite reliable result. The snow will drift sometimes the whole width of a field, and fill a road or valley beyond, so that it would be well your measuring included several such driftings. Very little reliance is to be put on the usual estimates of the depth of snow. I have heard different men set this snow at six, fifteen, eighteen, twenty-four, thirty-six, and forty-eight inches. My snow-shoes sank about four inches into the snow this morning, but more than twice as much the 29th.

On the N. side of the railroad, above the Red House crossing, the train has cut through a drift about one fourth of a mile long, and two to nine feet high, straight up and down. It reminds me of the Highlands, the Pictured Rocks, the side of an iceberg, etc. Now that the sun has just sunk below the horizon, it is wonderful what an amount of soft light it appears to be absorbing. There appears to be more day just here by its side than anywhere else. I can almost see to a depth of six inches into it. It is made translucent, it is so saturated with light.

I have heard of one precious stone found in Concord, the cinnamon stone. A geologist has spoken of it as found in this town, and a farmer described to me one he once found, perhaps the same referred to by the other. He said it was as large as a brick, and as thick, and yet you could distinguish a pin through it, it was so transparent.

Jan. 2, 1855. . . . Yesterday [skating] we saw the pink light on the snow within a rod of us. The shadows of the bridges, etc., on the snow were a dark indigo blue.

Jan. 2, 1859. . . . Going up the hill through Stow's young oak wood-land, I listen to the sharp, dry rustle of the withered oak leaves. This is the voice of the wood now. It would be comparatively still and more dreary here in other respects, if it were not for these leaves that hold on. It sounds like the roar of the sea, and is inspiriting like that, suggesting how all the land is sea-coast to the aerial ocean. It is the sound of the surf, the rut, of an unseen ocean, — billows of air breaking on the forest, like water on itself or on sand and rocks. It rises and falls, swells and dies away, with agreeable alternation, as the sea surf does. Perhaps the landsmen can foretell a storm by it. It is remarkable how universal these grand murmurs are, these backgrounds of sound, — the surf,

the wind in the forest, waterfalls, etc., — which yet to the ear and in their origin are essentially one voice, the earth voice, the breathing or snoring of the creature. The earth is our ship, and this is the sound of the wind in her rigging as we sail. Just as the inhabitant of Cape Cod hears the surf ever breaking on its shores, so we countrymen hear this kindred surf on the leaves of the forest. Regarded as a voice, though it is not articulate, as our articulate sounds are divided into vowels (though this is nearer a consonant sound), labials, dentals, palatals, sibilants, mutes, aspirates, etc., sō this may be called folial or frondal, produced by air driven against the leaves, and comes nearest to our sibilants or aspirates.

Michaux said that white oaks might be distinguished by retaining their leaves in the winter, but as far as my observation goes they cannot be so distinguished. All our large oaks may retain a few leaves at the base of the lower limbs and about the trunk, though only a few, and the white oak scarcely more than the others; while the same trees, when young, are all alike thickly clothed in the winter, but the leaves of the white oak are the most withered and shriveled of them all.

There being some snow on the ground, I can easily distinguish the forest on the mountains

(the Peterboro Hills, etc.), and tell which are forested, those parts and those mountains being dark, like a shadow. I cannot distinguish the forest thus far in summer.

When I hear the hypercritical quarreling about grammar and style, the position of the particles, etc., etc., stretching or contracting every speaker to certain rules, — Mr. Webster, perhaps, not having spoken according to Mr. Kirkham's rule, — I see they forget that the first requisite and rule is that expression shall be vital and natural, as much as the voice of a brute, or an interjection: first of all, mother tongue; and last of all, artificial or father tongue. Essentially, your truest poetic sentence is as free and lawless as a lamb's bleat. The grammarian is often one who can neither cry nor laugh, yet thinks he can express human emotions. So the posture-masters tell you how you shall walk, turning your toes out excessively, perhaps; but so the beautiful walkers are not made. . . .

Minott says that a fox will lead a dog on to the ice in order that he may get in. Tells of Jake Lakin losing a hound so, which went under the ice and was drowned below the Holt. . . . They used to cross the river there on the ice, going to market formerly.

Jan. 3, 1842. It is pleasant when one can

relieve the grossness of the kitchen and the table by the simple beauty of his repast, so that there may be anything in it to attract the eye of the artist, even. I have been popping corn to-night, which is only a more rapid blossoming of the seed under a greater than July heat. The popped corn is a perfect winter flower, hinting of anemones and houstonias. . . . Here has bloomed for my repast such a delicate flower as will soon spring by the wall sides, and this is as it should be. Why should not Nature revel sometimes, and genially relax, and make herself familiar at my board? I would have my house a bower fit to entertain her. It is a feast of such innocence as might have snowed down; on my warm hearth sprang these cerealian blossoms; here was the bank where they grew. Methinks some such visible token of approval would always accompany the simple and healthy repast, — some such smiling or blessing upon it. Our appetite should always be so related to our taste, and our board be an epitome of the primeval table which Nature sets by hill and wood and stream for her dumb pensioners.

Jan. 3, 1852. . . . A spirit sweeps the string of the telegraph harp, and strains of music are drawn out suddenly, like the wire itself. . . . What becomes of the story of a tortoise shell on the seashore now? The world is young, and

music is its infant voice. I do not despair of a world where you have only to stretch an ordinary wire from tree to tree to hear such strains drawn from it by New England breezes as make Greece and all antiquity seem poor in melody. Why was man so made as to be thrilled to his inmost being by the vibrating of a wire? Are not inspiration and ecstasy a more rapid vibration of the nerves swept by the inrushing excited spirit, whether zephyral or boreal in its character?

Jan. 3, 1853. . . . I love Nature partly because she is not man, but a retreat from him. None of his institutions control or pervade her. Here a different kind of right prevails. In her midst I can be glad with an entire gladness. If this world were all man, I could not stretch myself. I should lose all hope. He is constraint; she is freedom to me. He makes me wish for another world; she makes me content with this. None of the joys she supplies is subject to his rules and definitions. What he touches he taints. In thought he moralizes. One would think that no free, joyful labor was possible to him. How infinite and pure the least pleasure of which nature is basis compared with the congratulation of mankind! The joy which nature yields is like that afforded by the frank words of one we love.

Man, man is the devil,
The source of all evil.

Methinks these prosers, with their saws and their laws, do not know how glad a man can be. What wisdom, what warning, can prevail against gladness? There is no law so strong which a little gladness may not transgress. I have a room all to myself. It is nature. It is a place beyond the jurisdiction of human governments. Pile up your books, the records of sadness, your saws and your laws, Nature is glad outside, and her many worms within will erelong topple them down. . . . Nature is a prairie for outlaws. There are two worlds, — the post-office and nature. I know them both. I continually forget mankind and their institutions, as I do a bank.

Jan. 3, 1856. It is astonishing how far a merely well-dressed and good looking man may go without being challenged by a sentinel. What is called good society will bid high for such.

The man whom the state has raised to high office, like that of governor, for instance, from some, it may be, honest but less respected calling, cannot return to his former humble but profitable pursuits, his old customers will be so shy of him. His ex-honorableness stands seriously in his way, whether he be a lawyer or a shopkeeper. He can't get ex-honorated. So he

becomes a sort of state pauper, an object of charity on its hands, which the state is bound in honor to see through and provide with offices of similar respectability, that he may not come to want. The man who has been president becomes the ex-president, and can't travel or stay at home anywhere, but men will persist in paying respect to his ex-ship. It is cruel to remember his deeds so long. When his time is out, why can't they let the poor fellow go?

Jan. 3, 1861. Why should the ornamental tree society confine its labors to the highway only? An Englishman laying out his ground does not regard simply the avenues and walks. Does not the landscape deserve attention? What are the natural features which make a township handsome? A river, with its waterfalls and meadows, a lake, a hill, a cliff or individual rocks, a forest, and ancient trees standing singly. Such things are beautiful; they have a high use which dollars and cents never represent. If the inhabitants of a town were wise, they would seek to preserve these things, though at a considerable expense; for such things educate far more than any hired teachers, preachers, or any system of school education at present organized. Far the handsomest thing I saw in Boxboro was its noble oak wood. I doubt if there is a finer one in Massachusetts. Let the

town keep it a century longer, and men will make pilgrimages to it from all parts of the country. And yet it would be very like the rest of New England if Boxboro were ashamed of that wood-land. I have since learned, however, that she is contented to let that forest stand, instead of the houses and farms that might supplant it, because the land pays a much larger tax to the town now than it would then. I said to myself, if the history of the town is written, the chief stress is probably laid on its parish, and there is not one word about the forest in it. It would be worth while if in each town a committee were appointed to see that the beauty of the town received no detriment. If we have the biggest bowlder in the country, then it should not belong to an individual, nor be made into a door-step. As in many countries precious metals belong to the crown, so here more precious natural objects of rare beauty should belong to the public. Not only the channel, but both banks of every river should be a public highway. It is not the only use of a river, to float on it. Think of a mountain top in the township, even to the minds of the Indians a sacred place, only accessible through private grounds, — a temple, as it were, which you cannot enter except at the risk of letting out or letting in somebody's cattle, — in fact the temple

itself in this case private property, and standing in a man's cow-yard. New Hampshire courts have lately been deciding, as if it were for them to decide, whether the top of Mt. Washington belonged to A. or to B., and it being decided in favor of B., as I hear, he went up one winter with the proper officers and took formal possession. But I think that the top of Mt. Washington should not be private property; it should be but an opportunity for modesty and reverence, or if only to suggest that earth has higher uses than we commonly put her to. . . .

Thus we behave like oxen in a flower garden. The true fruit of nature can only be plucked with a delicate hand not bribed by any earthly reward, and a fluttering heart. No hired man can help us to gather this crop. How few ever get beyond feeding, clothing, sheltering, and warming themselves in this world, and begin to treat themselves as intellectual and moral beings. . . . Most men, it seems to me, do not care for Nature, and would sell their share in all her beauty, as long as they may live, for a stated sum. Thank God, men cannot as yet fly, and lay waste the sky as well as the earth. We are safe on that side for the present. We cut down the few old oaks which witnessed the transfer of the township from the Indian to the white man, and commence our museum with a cartridge-box taken from a British soldier in 1775.

Jan. 4, 1841. I know a woman who is as true to me, and as incessant with her mild rebuke as the blue sky. When I stand under her cope, instantly all pretension drops off, and I am swept by an influence as by a wind and rain which remove all taint. I am fortunate that I can pass and repass before her each day, and prove my strength in her glances. She is far truer to me than to herself. Her eyes are like the windows of nature, through which I catch glimpses of the native land of the soul. From them comes a light which is not of the sun. His rays are in eclipse when they shine on me.

Jan. 4, 1850. The longest silence is the most pertinent question most pertinently put. Emphatically silent. The most important questions, whose answers concern us more than any others, are never put in any other way.

It is difficult for two strangers, mutually well disposed, so truly to bear themselves toward each other that a feeling of falseness and hollowness shall not soon spring up between them. The least anxiety to behave truly, vitiates the relation.

Jan. 4, 1853. To what I will call Yellow Birch Swamp, E. Hubbard's, in the north part of the town, . . . west of the Hunt pasture. There are more of these trees in it than anywhere else in the town that I know. How pleas-

ing to stand near a new or rare tree; and few are so handsome as this; singularly allied to the black birch in its sweet checkerberry scent and its form, and to the canoe birch in its peeling or fringed and tasseled bark. The top is brush-like as in the black birch. The bark an exquisite . . . delicate gold color, curled off partly from the trunk with vertical clear or smooth spaces, as if a plane had been passed up the tree. The sight of these trees affects me more than California gold. I measured one five and two twelfths feet in circumference at six feet from the ground. We have the silver and the golden birch. This is like a fair, flaxen-haired sister of the dark-complexioned black birch, with golden ringlets. How lustily it takes hold of the swampy soil and braces itself. And here flows a dark cherry-wood or wine-colored brook over the iron-red sands in the sombre swamp, swampy wine. In an undress, this tree. Ah, the time will come when these will be all gone. Among the primitive trees. What sort of dryads haunt these? Blonde nymphs. Near by, the great pasture oaks with horizontal boughs. At Pratt's, the stupendous boughy branching elm, like vast thunderbolts stereotyped upon the sky, heaven-defying, sending back dark, vegetable bolts, as if flowing back in the channel of the lightning. — The white oaks have a few leaves

about the crown of the trunk, in the lower part of the tree, like a tree within a tree. The tree is thus less wracked by the wind and ice. — In the twilight I went through the swamp, and the yellow birches sent forth a yellow gleam which each time made my heart beat faster. Occasionally you come to a dead and leaning white birch, beset with large fungi like ears or little shelves, with a rounded edge above. I walked with the yellow birch. The prinos is green within. If there were Druids whose temples were the oak groves, my temple is the swamp. Sometimes I was in doubt about a birch whose vest was buttoned, smooth and dark, till I came nearer and saw the yellow gleaming through, or where a button was off.

Jan. 4, 1857. . . . After spending four or five days surveying and drawing a plan, incessantly, I especially feel the need of putting myself in communication with nature again to recover my tone, to withdraw out of the wearying and unprofitable world of affairs. The things I have been doing have but a fleeting and accidental importance, however much men are immersed in them, and yield very little valuable fruit. I would fain have been wading through the woods and fields, and conversing with the sane snow. Having waded in the very shallowest stream of time, I would now bathe my temples

in eternity. I wish again to participate in the serenity of nature, to share the happiness of the river and the woods. I thus from time to time break off my connection with eternal truths, and go with the shallow stream of human affairs, grinding at the mill of the Philistines. But when my task is done, with never-failing confidence, I devote myself to the infinite again. It would be sweet to deal with men more, I can imagine, but where dwell they? Not in the fields which I traverse.

Jan. 4, 1858. . . . That bright and warm reflection of sunlight from the insignificant edging of stubble was remarkable. I was coming down stream over the meadow on the ice, within four or five rods of the eastern shore, the sun on my left about a quarter of an hour above the horizon. The ice was soft and sodden, of a dull lead color, quite dark and reflecting no light, as I looked eastward, but my eyes caught, by accident, a singular, sunny brightness, reflected from the narrow border of stubble only three or four inches high, and as many feet wide perhaps, which rose along the edge of the ice at the foot of the hill. It was not a mere brightening of the bleached stubble, but the warm and yellow light of the sun, which, as appeared, it was peculiarly fitted to reflect. It was that amber light from the west which we sometimes witness after

a storm, concentrated on the stubble, for the hill beyond was merely a dark russet, spotted with snow. All the yellow rays seemed to be reflected by this insignificant stubble alone, and when I looked more generally a little above it, seeing it with the under part of my eye, . . . the reflected light made its due impression . . . separated from the proper color of the stubble, and it glowed almost like a low, steady, and serene fire. It was precisely as if the sunlight had mechanically slid over the ice, and lodged against the stubble. It will be enough to say of something warmly and sunnily bright, that it glowed like lit stubble. It was remarkable that looking eastward this was the only evidence of the light in the west.

Jan. 5, 1841. I grudge to the record that lavish expenditure of love and grace which are due rather to the spoken thought. A man writes because he has no opportunity to speak. Why should he be the only mute creature, and his speech no part of the melody of the grove? He never gladdens the ear of nature, and ushers in no spring with his lays. — We are more anxious to speak than to be heard.

Jan. 5, 1842. I find that, whatever hindrances occur, I write just about the same amount of truth in my journal, for the record is more concentrated, and usually it is some very real and

earnest life that interrupts. All flourishes are omitted. If I saw wood from morning to night, though I grieve that I could not observe the train of my thoughts during that time, yet in the evening, the few scrawled lines which describe my day's occupation will make the creaking of the saw more musical than my freest fancies could have been. . . .

I discover in Raleigh's verses the vices of the courtier. They are not equally sustained, as if his noble genius were warped by the frivolous society of the court. He was capable of rising to a remarkable elevation. His poetry has for the most part a heroic tone and vigor, as of a knight errant. But again there seems to have been somewhat unkindly in his education, as if he had by no means grown up to be the man he promised. He was apparently too genial and loyal a soul, or rather he was incapable of resisting temptation from that quarter. If to his genius and culture he could have added the temperament of Fox or Cromwell, the world would have had cause longer to remember him. . . . One would have said it was by some lucky fate that he and Shakespeare flourished at the same time in England, and yet what do we know of their acquaintanceship?

Jan. 5, 1852. To-day the trees are white with snow, — I mean their stems and branches, —

and have the true wintry look on the storm side. Not till this has winter come to the forest. It looks like the small frost-work in the path and on the windows now, especially the oak woods at a distance, and you see better the form which the branches take. That is a picture of winter; and now you may put a cottage under the trees and roof it with snow-drifts, and let the smoke curl up amid the boughs in the morning.

It was a dark day, the heavens shut out with dense snow clouds, and the trees wetting me with the melting snow, when going through Brown's wood on Fair Haven, which they are cutting off, and suddenly looking between the stems of the trees, I thought I saw an extensive fire in the western horizon. It was a bright, coppery yellow fair weather cloud along the edge of the horizon, gold with some alloy of copper, in such contrast with the remaining clouds as to suggest nothing less than fire. On that side, the clouds which covered our day, low in the horizon, with a dim and smoke-like edge, were rolled up like a curtain with heavy folds, revealing this further bright curtain beyond.

Jan. 5, 1854. . . . This afternoon, as probably yesterday, it being warm and thawing, though fair, the snow is covered with snow fleas. Especially they are sprinkled like pepper for half a mile in the tracks of a wood-chopper in

deep snow. With the first thawing weather they come. — There is also some blueness now in the snow, the heavens being toward night overcast. The blueness is more distinct after sunset.

Jan. 5, 1855. [Worcester.] A. M. Walked to southerly end of Quinsigamond Pond *via* Quinsigamond Village, and returned by floating bridge. Saw the straw-built wigwam of an Indian from St. Louis (Rapids?), Canada, apparently a half-breed. Not being able to buy straw, he had made it chiefly of dry grass which he had cut in a meadow with his knife. It was against a bank, and partly of earth all round. The straw or grass laid on horizontal poles, and kept down by similar ones outside, like our thatching. Makes them of straw often in Canada, can make one, if he has the straw, in one day. The door, on hinges, was of straw also, put on perpendicularly, pointed at top to fit the roof. The roof steep, six or eight inches thick. He was making baskets, wholly of sugar maple; could find no black ash. Sewed or bound the edge with maple also. Did not look up once while we were there. There was a fire-place of stone running out on one side, and covered with earth. It was the nest of a large meadow mouse. Had he ever hunted moose? When he was down at Green Island. Where was that?

Oh, far down, very far; caught seals there. No books down that way. . . .

R. W. E. told of Mr. Hill, his classmate, of Bangor, who was much interested in my "Walden," but relished it merely as a capital satire and joke, and even thought that the survey and map of the pond were not real, but a caricature of the Coast Survey.

Jan. 5, 1856. . . . The thin snow now driving from the north and lodging on my coat consists of those beautiful star crystals, not cottony and chubby spokes as on the 13th of December, but thin and partly transparent crystals. They are about one tenth of an inch in diameter, perfect little wheels with six spokes, without a tire, or rather with six perfect little leaflets, fern-like, with a distinct, straight, slender, midrib, raying from the centre. On each side of each midrib there is a transparent, thin blade with a crenate edge. How full of the creative genius is the air in which these are generated! I should hardly admire more, if real stars fell and lodged on my coat. Nature is full of genius, full of the divinity, so that not a snow-flake escapes its fashioning hand. Nothing is cheap and coarse, neither dew-drops nor snow-flakes. Soon the storm increases (it was already very severe to face), and the snow comes finer, more white and powdery. — Who knows but this is the original form of

all snow-flakes, but that, when I observe these crystal stars falling around me, they are only just generated in the low mist next the earth. I am nearer to the source of the snow, its primal, auroral, and golden hour or infancy; commonly the flakes reach us travel-worn and agglomerated, comparatively without order or beauty, far down in their fall, like men in their advanced age. As for the circumstances under which this phenomenon occurs, it is quite cold, and the driving storm is bitter to face, though very little snow is falling. It comes almost horizontally from the north. . . . A divinity must have stirred within them, before the crystals did thus shoot and set. Wheels of the storm chariots. The same law that shapes the earth and the stars shapes the snow-flake. Call it rather snow star. As surely as the petals of a flower are numbered, each of these countless snow stars comes whirling to earth, pronouncing thus with emphasis the number six, order, κοσμος. This was the beginning of a storm which reached far and wide, and elsewhere was more severe than here. On the Saskatchewan, where no man of science is present to behold, still down they come, and not the less fulfill their destiny, perchance melt at once on the Indian's face. What a world we live in, where myriads of these little disks, so beautiful to the most prying eye, are whirled

down on every traveler's coat, the observant and the unobservant, on the restless squirrel's fur, on the far-stretching fields and forests, the wooded dells and the mountain tops. Far, far away from the haunts of man, they roll down some little slope, fall over and come to their bearings, and melt or lose their beauty in the mass, ready anon to swell some little rill with their contribution, and so, at last, the universal ocean from which they came. There they lie, like the wreck of chariot wheels after a battle in the skies. Meanwhile the meadow mouse shoves them aside in his gallery, the school-boy casts them in his snow-ball, or the woodman's sled glides smoothly over them, these glorious spangles, the sweepings of heaven's floor. And they all sing, melting as they sing, of the mysteries of the number six; six, six, six. He takes up the waters of the sea in his hand, leaving the salt; he disperses it in mist through the skies; he re-collects and sprinkles it like grain in six-rayed snowy stars over the earth, there to lie till he dissolves its bonds again.

Jan. 5, 1859. As I go over the causeway near the railroad bridge, I hear a fine, busy twitter, and looking up, see a nuthatch hopping along and about a swamp white oak branch, inspecting every side of it, as readily hanging head downwards as standing upright, and then

it utters a distinct *quah*, as if to attract a companion. Indeed, that other finer twitter seemed designed to keep some companion in tow, or else it was like a very busy man talking to himself. The companion was a single chickadee, which lisped six or eight feet off. There were perhaps no other birds than these within a quarter of a mile. When the nuthatch flitted to another tree two rods off, the chickadee unfailingly followed.

Jan. 5, 1860. . . . A man receives only what he is ready to receive, whether physically, or intellectually, or morally, as animals conceive their kind at certain seasons only. We hear and apprehend only what we already half know. If there is something which does not concern me, which is out of my line, which by experience or by genius my attention is not drawn to, however novel and remarkable it may be, if it is spoken, I hear it not, if it is written, I read it not, or if I read it, it does not detain me. Every man thus *tracks himself* through life, in all his hearing and reading and observation and traveling. His observations make a chain. The phenomenon or fact that cannot in any wise be linked with the rest which he has observed, he does not observe. By and by we may be ready to receive what we cannot receive now. I find, for example, in Aristotle something about the

spawning, etc., of the pout and perch, because I know something about it already, and have my attention aroused, but I do not discover till very late that he has made other equally important observations on the spawning of other fishes, because I am not interested in those fishes.

Jan. 6, 1838. As a child looks forward to the coming of the summer, so could we contemplate with quiet joy the circle of the seasons returning without fail eternally. As the spring came round during so many years of the gods, we could go out to admire and adorn anew our Eden, and yet never tire.

Jan. 6, 1841. We are apt to imagine that this hubbub of Philosophy, Literature, and Religion, which is heard in pulpits, lyceums, and parlors, vibrates through the universe, and is as catholic a sound as the creaking of the earth's axle. But if a man sleeps soundly, he will forget it all between sunset and dawn. It is the three-inch swing of some pendulum in a cupboard, which the great pulse of Nature vibrates clearly through each instant. When we lift our lids and open our ears, it disappears with smoke and rattle, like the cars on the railroad.

Jan. 6, 1857. . . . A man asked me the other night whether such and such persons were not as happy as anybody, being conscious, as I

perceived, of much unhappiness himself and not aspiring to much more than an animal content. Why, said I, speaking to his condition, the stones are happy, Concord River is happy, and I am happy too. When I took up a fragment of a walnut shell this morning, I saw by its grain and composition, its form and color, etc., that it was made for happiness. The most brutish and inanimate objects that are made suggest an everlasting and thorough satisfaction. They are the homes of content. Wood, earth, mould, etc., exist for joy. Do you think that Concord River would have continued to flow these millions of years by Clamshell Hill, and round Hunt's Island, if it had not been happy, if it had been miserable in its channel, tired of existence, and cursing its maker and the hour when it sprang.

Jan. 6, 1858. . . . I derive a certain excitement not to be refused even from going through Dennis's swamp on the opposite side of the railroad, where the poison dogwood abounds. This simple-stemmed bush is very full of fruit, hanging in loose, dry, pale green, drooping panicles. Some of them are a foot long. It impresses me as the most fruitful shrub thereabouts. I cannot refrain from plucking it, and bringing home some fruitful sprigs. Other fruits are there which belong to the hard season,

the enduring panicled andromeda, and a few partly decayed prinos berries. I walk amid the bare midribs of cinnamon ferns, with at most a terminal leafet, and here and there I see a little dark water at the bottom of a dimple in the snow over which the snow has not yet been able to prevail. — I was feeling very cheap, nevertheless, reduced to make the most of dry dogwood berries. Very little evidence of God or man did I see just then, and life was not as rich and inviting an enterprise as it should be, when my attention was caught by a snow-flake on my coat sleeve. It was one of those perfect, crystalline, star-shaped ones, six rayed, like a flat wheel with six spokes, only the spokes were perfect little pine trees in shape, arranged around a central spangle. This little object which, with many of its fellows, rested unmelting on my coat, so perfect and beautiful, reminded me that virtue had not lost her pristine vigor yet, and why should man lose heart? Sometimes the pines were worn, and had lost their branches, and again it appeared as if several stars had impinged on one another at various angles, making a somewhat spherical mass. . . . There were mingled with these starry flakes small downy pellets also. . . . We are rained and snowed on with gems. I confess that I was a little encouraged, for I was beginning to believe that

Nature was poor and mean, and I was now convinced that she turned off as good work as ever. What a world we live in! Where are the jewelers' shops? There is nothing handsomer than a snow-flake and a dew-drop. I may say that the maker of the world exhausts his skill with each snow-flake and dew-drop that he sends down. We think that the one mechanically coheres, and that the other simply flows together and falls, but in truth they are the product of *enthusiasm*, the children of an ecstasy, finished with the artist's utmost skill.

Jan. 6, 1859. P. M. To Martial Miles's. . . . Miles had hanging in his barn a little owl, *Strix Acadica*, which he caught alive with his hands about a week ago. He had forced it to eat, but it died. It was a funny little brown bird, spotted with white, seven and one half inches long to the end of the tail, or eight to the end of the claws, and nineteen in alar extent, not so long by considerable as a robin, though much stouter. This one had three (not two, and Nuttall says three) white bars on its tail, but no noticeable white at the tip. Its cunning feet were feathered quite to the extremity of the toes, looking like whitish (or tawny white) mice, or as when one pulls stockings over his boots. As usual, the white spots on the upper sides of the wings are smaller and a more distinct white, while those

beneath are much larger, but a subdued, satiny white. Even a bird's wing has an upper and an under side, and the last admits only of more subdued and tender colors.

Jan. 7, 1851. . . . The knowledge of an unlearned man is living and luxuriant like a forest, but covered with mosses and lichens, and for the most part inaccessible and going to waste; the knowledge of the man of science is like timber collected in yards for public works, which still supports a green sprout here and there, but even this is liable to dry rot.

I felt my spirits rise when I had got out of the road into the open fields, and the sky had a new appearance. I stepped along more buoyantly. There was a warm sunset in the wooded valleys, a yellowish tinge on the pines. Reddish dun-colored clouds, like dusky flames, stood over it, and then streaks of blue sky were seen here and there. The life, the joy that is in blue sky after a storm. There is no account of the blue sky in history. Before, I walked in the ruts of travel, now I adventured. . . .

If I have any conversation with a scamp in my walk, my afternoon is wont to be spoiled.

Jan. 7, 1852. . . . Now . . . I see the sun descending into the west. There is something new, a *snow* bow in the east, on the snow clouds, merely a *white* bow, hardly any color distin-

guishable. But in the west what inconceivable crystalline purity of blue sky, . . . and I see feathery clouds on this ground, some traveling north, others directly in the opposite direction, though apparently close together. Some of these cloudlets are waifs and droppings from rainbows, clear rainbow through and through, spun out of the fibre of the rainbow, or rather as if the children of the west had been pulling rainbow (instead of tow), that had done service, old junk of rainbow, and cast it into flocks. And then such fantastic, feathery scrawls of gauze-like vapor on this elysian ground! We never tire of the drama of sunset. I go forth each afternoon and look into the west a quarter of an hour before sunset with fresh curiosity to see what new picture will be painted there, what new phenomenon exhibited, what new dissolving views. . . . Every day a new picture is painted and framed, held up for half an hour in such lights as the great artist chooses, and then withdrawn and the curtain falls. The sun goes down, long the after-glow gives light, the damask curtains glow along the western window, the first star is lit, and I go home.

Jan. 7, 1853. To Nawshawtuck. This is one of those pleasant winter mornings when you find the river firmly frozen in the night, but still the air is serene and the sun feels gratefully

warm an hour after sunrise. Though so fair, . . . a whitish vapor fills the lower stratum of the air concealing the mountains. The smokes go up from the village, you hear the cocks with immortal vigor, the children shout on their way to school, and the sound made by the railroad men hammering a rail is uncommonly musical. This promises a perfect winter day. In the heavens, except the altitude of the sun, you have, as it were, the conditions of summer, perfect serenity and clarity, and sonorousness in the earth. All nature is but braced by the cold. It gives tension to both body and mind. . . .

About ten minutes before 10 A. M. I heard a very loud sound, and felt a violent jar which made the house rock and the loose articles on my table rattle. I knew it must be either a powder mill blown up or an earthquake. Not knowing but another and more violent shock might take place, I immediately ran down-stairs. I saw from the door a vast expanding column of whitish smoke rising in the west directly over the powder mills four miles distant. It was unfolding its volumes above, which made it wider there. In three or four minutes it had all risen and spread itself into a lengthening, somewhat copper-colored cloud, parallel with the horizon from N. to S., and in about ten minutes after the explosion, it passed over my head,

being several miles long from N. to S., and distinctly dark and smoky toward the N., not nearly so high as the few cirrhi in the sky. Jumped into a man's wagon and rode toward the mills. In a few minutes more, I saw behind me, far in the E., a faint, salmon-colored cloud carrying the news of the explosion to the sea, and perchance over the head of the absent proprietor. Arrived probably before half-past ten. There were perhaps thirty or forty wagons there. The kernel mill had blown up first, and killed three men who were in it, said to be turning a roller with a chisel. In three seconds after, one of the mixing houses exploded. The kernel house was swept away, and fragments, mostly but a foot or two in length, were strewn over the hills and meadows for thirty rods. The slight snow on the ground was for the most part melted around. The mixing house about ten rods W. was not so completely dispersed, for most of the machinery remained a total wreck. The press house about twelve rods E. had two thirds of its boards off, and a mixing house next westward from that which blew up had lost some boards on the E. side. The boards fell out (*i. e.*, of those buildings which did not blow up), the air within apparently rushing out to fill up the vacuum occasioned by the explosions. So the powder

being bared to the fiery particles in the air, the building explodes. The powder on the floor of the bared press house was six inches deep in some places, and the crowd were thoughtlessly going into it. A few windows were broken thirty or forty rods off. Timber six inches square and eighteen feet long was thrown a dozen rods over a hill eighty feet high at least. Thirty rods was about the limit of fragments. The drying house, in which was a fire, was perhaps twenty-five rods distant and escaped. . . . Some of the clothes of the men were in the tops of the trees where undoubtedly their bodies had been and left them. . . . Put the different buildings thirty rods apart, and then but one will blow up at a time.

Jan. 7, 1854. P. M. To Ministerial Swamp. . . . I went to these woods partly to hear an owl, but did not. Now that I have left them nearly a mile behind, I hear one distinctly, *hoorer hoo.* Strange that we should hear this sound so often, yet so rarely see the bird, oftenest at twilight. It has a singular prominence as a sound. . . . It is a sound which the wood or the horizon makes.

Jan. 7, 1855. . . . Cloudy and misty. On opening the door I feel a very warm southwesterly wind contrasting with the cooler air of the house, and find it unexpectedly wet in the street.

It is in fact a January thaw. The channel of the river is quite open in many places, and in others I remark that the ice and water alternate like waves and the hollow between them. There are long reaches of open water where I look for muskrats and ducks as I go along to Clamshell Hill. I hear the pleasant sound of running water. . . . The delicious, soft, spring-suggesting air, how it fills my veins with life. Life becomes again credible to me. A certain dormant life awakes in me, and I begin to love nature again. Here is my Italy, my heaven, my New England. I understand why the Indians hereabouts placed heaven in the S. W. The soft south. On the slopes, the ground is laid bare, and radical leaves revealed, crowfoot, shepherd's purse, clover, etc., a fresh green, and, in the meadow, the skunk-cabbage buds with a bluish bloom, and the red leaves of the meadow saxifrage. These and the many withered plants laid bare remind me of spring and of botany. — On the same bare sand is revealed a new crop of arrow heads. I pick up two perfect ones of quartz, sharp as if just from the hand of the maker. Still, birds are very rare. Here comes a little flock of titmice plainly to keep me company, with their black caps and throats making them look top-heavy, restlessly hopping along the alders with a sharp, clear, lisping note.

. . . The bank is tinged with a most delicate pink or bright flesh color where the *Beomyces roseus* grows. It is a lichen day. . . . The sky seen here and there through the wrack, bluish and greenish, and perchance with a vein of red in the W., seems like the inside of a shell, deserted of its tenant, into which I have crawled. The willow catkins began to peep from under their scales as early as the 26th of last month. Many buds have lost their scales.

Jan. 7, 1857. P. M. To Walden. . . . It is bitter cold, with a cutting N. W. wind. The pond is now a plain snow field, but there are no tracks of fishers on it. It is too cold for them. . . . All animate things are reduced to their lowest terms. This is the fifth day of cold, blowing weather. All tracks are concealed in an hour or two. Some have to make their paths two or three times a day. The fisherman is not here, for his lines would freeze in. I go through the woods toward the cliffs along the side of the Well Meadow field. There is nothing so sanative, so poetic, as a walk in the woods and fields even now, when I meet none abroad for pleasure. Nothing so inspires me, and excites such serene and profitable thought. The objects are elevating. In the street and in society I am almost invariably cheap and dissipated, my life

is unspeakably mean. No amount of gold or respectability could in the least redeem it, dining with the governor or a member of Congress!! But alone in distant woods or fields, in unpretending sproutlands or pastures tracked by rabbits, even in a bleak and, to most, cheerless day like this, when a villager would be thinking of his inn, I come to myself, I once more feel myself grandly related. This cold and solitude are friends of mine. I suppose that this value, in my case, is equivalent to what others get by church-going and prayer. I come to my solitary woodland walk as the homesick go home. I thus dispose of the superfluous, and see things as they are, grand and beautiful. I have told many that I walk every day about half the daylight, but I think they do not believe it. I wish to get the Concord, the Massachusetts, the America, out of my head and be sane a part of every day. I wish to forget a considerable part of every day, all mean, narrow, trivial men (and this requires usually to forego and forget all personal relations so long), and therefore I come out to these solitudes where the problem of existence is simplified. I get away a mile or two from the town, into the stillness and solitude of nature, with rocks, trees, weeds, snow about me. I enter some glade in the woods, perchance, where a few weeds and dry leaves alone lift

themselves above the surface of the snow, and it is as if I had come to an open window. I see out and around myself. Our sky-lights are thus far away from the ordinary resorts of men. I am not satisfied with ordinary windows. I must have a true sky-light, and that is outside the village. I am not thus expanded, recreated, enlightened when I meet a company of men. It chances that the sociable, the town and country club, the farmers' club does not prove a sky-light to me. . . . The man I meet with is not often so instructive as the silence he breaks. This stillness, solitude, wildness of nature is a kind of thoroughwort or boneset to my intellect. This is what I go out to seek. It is as if I always met in those places some grand, serene, immortal, infinitely encouraging, though invisible companion, and walked with him. There at last my nerves are steadied, my senses and my mind do their office. I am aware that most of my neighbors would think it a hardship to be compelled to linger here one hour, especially this bleak day, and yet I receive this sweet and ineffable compensation for it. It is the most agreeable thing I do. I love and celebrate nature even in detail, because I love the scenery of these interviews and translations. I love to remember every creature that was at this club. I thus get off a certain social scurf. . . . I do not consider

the other animals brutes in the common sense. I am attracted toward them undoubtedly because I never heard any nonsense from them. I have not convicted them of folly, or vanity, or pomposity, or stupidity in dealing with me. Their vices, at any rate, do not interfere with me. My fairies invariably take to flight when a man appears upon the scene. In a caucus, a meeting-house, a lyceum, a club-room there is nothing like this fine experience for me. But away out of the town, on Brown's scrub oak lot, which was sold the other day for six dollars an acre, I have company such as England cannot buy nor afford. This society is what I live, what I survey for. I subscribe generously to *this* all that I have and am. There in that Well Meadow field, perhaps, I feel in my element again, as when a fish is put back into the water. I wash off all my chagrins. All things go smoothly as the axle of the universe.

I can remember that when I was very young I used to have a dream night after night, over and over again, which might have been named Rough and Smooth. All existence, all satisfaction and dissatisfaction, all event, was symbolized in this way. Now I seemed to be lying and tossing, perchance, on a horrible, a fatal rough surface, which must soon indeed put an end to my existence (though even in my dream I knew it

to be the symbol merely of my misery), and then again, suddenly, I was lying on a delicious smooth surface, as of a summer sea, as of gossamer or down, or softest plush, and it was a luxury to live. My waking experience always has been and is an alternate Rough and Smooth. In other words it is Insanity and Sanity.

Might I aspire to praise the moderate nymph Nature, I must be like her, moderate.

Jan. 7, 1858. The storm is over, and it is one of those beautiful winter mornings when a vapor is seen hanging in the air between the village and the woods. Though the snow is only six inches deep, the yards appear full of those beautiful crystals, star or wheel shaped flakes, as a measure is full of grain. . . . By ten o'clock I notice a very long, level stratum of cloud not very high in the S. E. sky (all the rest being clear), which I suspect to be the vapor from the sea. This lasts for several hours.

These are true mornings of creation, original and poetic days, not mere repetitions of the past. There is no lingering of yesterday's fogs, only such a mist as might have adorned the first morning.

P. M. I see some tree sparrows feeding on the fine grass seed above the snow. They are flitting along one at a time, commonly sunk in the snow, uttering occasionally a low, sweet war-

ble, and seemingly as happy there, and with this wintry prospect before them for the night and several months to come, as any man by his fireside. One occasionally hops or flies toward another, and the latter suddenly jerks away from him. They are searching or hopping up to the fine grass, or oftener picking the seeds from the snow. At length the whole ten have collected within a space a dozen feet square, but soon after, being alarmed, they utter a different and less musical chirp, and flit away into an apple-tree.

Jan. 8, 1842. When, as now, in January a south wind melts the snow, and the bare ground appears covered with sere grass and occasionally wilted green leaves, which seem in doubt whether to let go their greenness quite or absorb new juices against the coming year, in such a season a perfume seems to exhale from the earth itself, and the south wind melts my integuments also. Then is she my mother earth. I derive a real vigor from the scent of the gale wafted over the naked ground, as from strong meats, and realize again how man is the pensioner of nature. We are always conciliated and cheered when we are fed by an influence, and our needs are felt to be part of the domestic economy of nature.

What offends me most in my compositions is the moral element in them. The repentant say never a brave word. Their resolves should be

mumbled in silence. Strictly speaking, morality is not healthy. The undeserved joys which come uncalled, and make us more pleased than grateful, are they that sing.

In the steadiness and equanimity of music lies its divinity. It is the only assured tone. When men attain to speak with as settled a faith, and as firm assurance, their voices will ring and their feet march as do the feet of a soldier. The very dogs howl if time is disregarded. Because of the perfect time of this music-box, its harmony with itself, is its greater dignity and stateliness. This music is more nobly related for its more exact measure. So simple a difference as this more even pace raises it to the higher dignity. . . . What are ears, what is time, that this particular series of sounds called a strain of music can be wafted down through the centuries from Homer to me, and Homer have been conversant with that same wandering and mysterious charm which never had a local habitation in space. . . . I feel a sad cheer when I hear these lofty strains, because there must be something in me as lofty that hears. Ah, I hear them but rarely. . . . They tell me the secrets of futurity. Where are its secrets wound up but in this box? So much hope had slumbered. — There are in music such strains as far surpass any faith which man ever

had in the loftiness of his destiny. He must be very sad before he can comprehend them. The clear liquid notes from the morning fields beyond seem to come through a vale of sadness to man which gives to all music a plaintive air. The sadness is in the echo which our lives make and which alone we hear. Music hath caught a higher pace than any virtue that I know. It is the arch reformer. It hastens the sun to his setting. It invites him to his rising. It is the sweetest reproach, a measured satire. I know there is somewhere a people where this heroism has place. Things are to be learned which it will be sweet to learn. This cannot be all rumor. When I hear this, I think of that everlasting something which is not mere sound, but is to be a thrilling reality, and I can consent to go about the meanest work for as many years of time as it pleases the Hindoo penance, for a year of the gods were as nothing to that which shall come after. What, then, can I do to hasten that other time, or that space where there shall be no time, and where these things shall be a more living part of my life, where there will be no discords in my life?

Jan. 8, 1851. . . . The light of the setting sun falling on the snow banks to-day made them glow almost yellow. — The hills seen from Fair Haven Pond make a wholly new landscape.

Covered with snow and yellowish green or brown pines, and shrub oaks, they look higher and more massive. Their white mantle relates them to the clouds in the horizon and to the sky. Perchance what is light-colored looks loftier than what is dark.

Jan. 8, 1852. . . . Even as early as 3 o'clock these winter afternoons the axes in the woods sound like night-fall, as if it were the sound of a twilight labor.

Reading from my MSS. to Miss Emerson this evening and using the word god, in one instance, in perchance a merely heathenish sense, she inquired hastily in a tone of dignified anxiety, "Is that god spelt with a little g?" Fortunately it was. (I had brought in the word god without any solemnity of voice or connection.) So I went on as if nothing had happened.

Jan. 8, 1854. . . . Stood within a rod of a downy woodpecker on an apple-tree. How curious and exciting the blood-red spot on its hind head! I ask why it is there, but no answer is rendered by these snow-clad fields. It is so close to the bark I do not see its feet. It looks behind as it had a black cassock open behind and showing a white under-garment between the shoulders and down the back. It is briskly and incessantly tapping all round the dead limbs, but hardly twice in a place, as if to

sound the tree, and so see if it has any worm in it, or perchance to start them. How much he deals with the bark of trees, all his life long tapping and inspecting it. He it is that scatters these fragments of bark and lichens about on the snow at the base of trees. What a lichenest he must be! or rather perhaps it is fungi make his favorite study, for he deals most with dead limbs. How briskly he glides up or drops himself down a limb, creeping round and round, and hopping from limb to limb, and now flitting with a rippling sound of his wings to another tree.

Jan. 8, 1857. . . . I picked up on the bare ice of the river . . . a furry caterpillar, black at the two ends and red-brown in the middle, rolled into a ball or close ring, like a woodchuck. I pressed it hard between my fingers and found it frozen, put it into my hat, and when I took it out in the evening, it soon began to stir, and at length crawled about, though a portion of it seemed not quite flexible. It took some time for it to thaw. This is the fifth cold day, and it must have been frozen so long.

Jan. 8, 1860. . . . To-day it is very warm and pleasant. 2 P. M. Walk to Walden. . . . After December all weather that is not wintry is spring-like. How changed are our feelings and thoughts by this more genial sky! When I get to the railroad, I listen from time to time to

hear some sound out of the distance which will express the mood of nature. The cock and the hen, that pheasant which we have domesticated, are perhaps the most sensitive among domestic animals to atmospheric changes. You cannot listen a moment such a day as this, but you will hear from far or near the clarion of the cock celebrating this new season, yielding to the influence of the south wind, or the drawling note of the hen dreaming of eggs that are to be. These are the sounds that fill the air, and no hum of insects. They are affected like voyagers approaching the land. We discover a new world every time we see the earth again, after it has been covered for a season with snow.

Jan. 8, 1861. . . . The Indians taught us not only the use of corn and how to plant it, but also of whortleberries and how to dry them for winter, and made us baskets to put them in. We should have hesitated long to eat some kinds of berries, if they had not set us the example, having learned by long experience that they were not only harmless, but salutary. I have added a few to my number of edible ones by walking behind an Indian in Maine who ate such as I never thought of eating before. Of course they made a much greater account of wild fruits than we do. What we call huckleberry cake made of Indian meal and huckleberries was

evidently the principal cake of the aborigines, and was generally known and used by them all over this part of North America, as much as or more than plum cake by us. They enjoyed it ages before our ancestors heard of Indian meal or huckleberries. If you had traveled here one thousand years ago, it would probably have been offered you alike on the Connecticut, the Potomac, the Niagara, the Ottawa, and the Mississippi. It appears . . . that the Indian used the dried berries commonly in the form of huckleberry cake, and also of huckleberry porridge or pudding. We have no national cake so universal and well known as this was in all parts of the country where corn and huckleberries grew.

Jan. 9, 1841. Each hearty stroke we deal with these outward hands slays an inward foe.

Jan. 9, 1842. One cannot too soon forget his errors and misdemeanors. To dwell long upon them is to add to the offense. Repentance and sorrow can only be displaced by something better, which is as free and original as if they had not been. Not to grieve long for any action, but to go immediately and do freshly and otherwise, subtracts so much from the wrong; else we may make the delay of repentance the punishment of the sin. A great soul will not consider its sins as its own, but be more absorbed in the prospect of

that valor and virtue for the future which is more properly itself, than in these improper actions which by being sins discover themselves to be not itself.

Sir Walter Raleigh's faults are those of a courtier and a soldier. In his counsels and aphorisms we see not unfrequently the haste and rashness of a boy. His philosophy was not wide nor deep, but continually giving way to the generosity of his nature. What he touches he adorns by his greater humanity and native nobleness, but he touches not the true and original. . . . He seems to have been fitted by his genius for short flights of impulsive poetry, but not for the sustained loftiness of Shakespeare or Milton. He was not wise nor a seer in any sense, but rather one of nature's nobility, the most generous nature which can be spared to linger in the purlieus of the court. — His was a singularly perverted genius, with a great inclination to originality and freedom, and yet who never steered his own course. Of so fair and susceptible a nature, rather than broad or deep, that he lingered to slake his thirst at the nearest and even somewhat turbid wells of truth and beauty. His homage to the less fair or noble left no space for homage to the all fair. The misfortune of his circumstances or rather of the man appears in the fact that he was the

author of "Maxims of State," "The Cabinet Council," and "The Soul's Errand."

Jan. 9, 1852. . . . Where a path has been shoveled through drifts in the road, I see . . . little heavens in the crannies and crevices. The deeper they are, and the larger masses they are surrounded by, the darker blue they are. Some are a very light blue with a tinge of green. Methinks I oftenest see this when it is snowing. At any rate, the atmosphere must be in a peculiar state. Apparently the snow absorbs the other rays, and reflects the blue. It has strained the air, and only the blue rays have passed through the sieve. . . . Into every track which the teamster makes this elysian, empyrean atmosphere rushes.

Jan. 9, 1853. 3 P. M. To Walden and Cliffs. The telegraph harp again. Always the same unrememberable revelation it is to me. I never hear it without thinking of Greece. How the Greeks harped upon the words, immortal, ambrosial. They are what it says. It stings my ear with everlasting truth. It allies Concord to Athens, and both to Elysium. It always . . . makes me sane, reverses my views of things. I get down the railroad till I hear that which makes all the world a lie. When the . . . west wind sweeps this wire, I rise to the height of my being. . . . This wire is my

redeemer. It always brings a special and a general message to me from the highest. Day before yesterday I looked at the mangled and blackened bodies of men which had been blown up by powder, and felt that the lives of men are not innocent, and that there was an avenging power in nature. To-day I hear this immortal melody while the west wind is blowing balmily on my cheek and a roseate sunset seems to be preparing. . . .

As I climbed the cliff, I paused in the sun and sat on a dry rock, dreaming. I thought of those summery hours, when time is tinged with eternity, runs into it, and becomes of one stuff with it, how much, how perhaps all that is best in our experience in middle life, may be resolved into the memory of our youth! Pulling up the Johnswort on the face of the cliff, I am surprised to see the signs of unceasing growth about the roots, fresh shoots two inches long, white with red leafets, and all the radical part quite green. The leaves of the crowfoot also are quite green, and carry me forward to spring. I dig one up with a stick, and pulling it to pieces, I find deep in the centre of the plant, just beneath the ground, surrounded by all the tender leaves that are to precede it, the blossom bud about half as big as the head of a pin, perfectly white. (?) (I open one next day, and it is

yellow.) There it patiently sits and slumbers, how full of faith, informed of a spring which the world has never seen, the promise and prophecy of it, shaped somewhat like some Eastern temples in which a bud-shaped dome o'ertops the whole. It affected me this tender dome-like bud within the bosom of the earth, like a temple upon its surface resounding with the worship of votaries. Methought I saw the priests with yellow robes within it. . . . It will go forth in April, this vestal, now cherishing here her fire, to be married to the sun. How innocent are nature's purposes! How unambitious!

I saw to-day the reflected sunset sky in the river, but the colors in the reflection were different from those in the sky. In the latter were dark clouds with coppery or dun-colored undersides; in the water were dun-colored clouds with bluish-green patches or bars.

Jan. 9, 1855. What a strong and hearty, but reckless, hit-or-miss style had some of the early writers of New England, like Josselyn and William Wood, and others elsewhere in those days; as if they spoke with a relish, smacking their lips like a coach whip, caring more to speak heartily than scientifically true. They are not to be caught napping by the wonders of nature in a new country, and perhaps are often more ready to appreciate them than she is to

exhibit them. They give you one piece of nature at any rate, and that is themselves. . . . The strong new soil speaks through them. I have just been reading somewhat in Wood's "New England's Prospect." He speaks a good word for New England, indeed will come very near lying for her, and when he doubts the justness of his praise, he brings it out not the less roundly; as who cares if it is not so, we love her not the less for all that. Certainly that generation stood nearer to nature, nearer to the facts than this, and hence their books have more life in them.

Jan. 9, 1858. Snows again. . . . The snow is very moist, with large flakes. Looking toward Trillium wood, the nearer flakes appear to move quite swiftly, often making the impression of a continuous white line. They are also seen to move directly, and nearly horizontally. But the more distant flakes appear to loiter in the air, as if uncertain how they will approach the earth, or even to cross the course of the former, and are always seen as simple and distinct flakes. I think that this difference is simply owing to the fact that the former pass quickly over the field of view, while the latter are much longer in it.

Jan. 9, 1860. . . . I hear that ——, a rich old farmer, who lives in a large house, with a

male housekeeper, and no other family, gets up at three or four o'clock these winter mornings, and milks seventeen cows regularly. When asked why he works so hard, he answers that the poor are obliged to work hard. Only think what a creature of fate he is, this old Jotun, milking his seventeen cows, though the thermometer goes down to — 25°, and not knowing why he does it. . . . Think how helpless, a rich man who can only do as he has done and as his neighbors do, one or all of them. What an account he will have to give of himself! He spent some time in a world, alternately cold and warm, and every winter morning with lantern in hand, when the first goblins were playing their tricks, he resolutely accomplished his task, milked his seventeen cows, while the man-housekeeper prepared his breakfast. . . . Think how tenaciously every man does his deed of some kind or other, though it be idleness! He is rich, dependent on nobody, and nobody is dependent on him, has as good health as the average, at least, can do as he pleases, as we say, yet he gravely rises every morning by candle-light, dons his cowhide boots and his frock, takes his lantern, and wends his way to the barn and milks his seventeen cows, milking with one hand, while he warms the other against the cow or his person. This is but the beginning of his

day, and his Augean stable work, so serious is the life he lives.

Jan. 10, 1856. The weather has considerably moderated, — 2° at breakfast time. It was — 8° at seven last evening, but this has been the coldest night probably. You lie with your feet or legs curled up, waiting for the morning, the sheets shining with frost about your mouth. Water left by the stove is frozen thick, and what you sprinkle in bathing falls on the floor, ice. The house plants are all frozen, and soon droop and turn black. I look out on the roof of a cottage covered a foot deep with snow, wondering how the poor children in its garret, with their few rags, contrive to keep their toes warm. I mark the white smoke from its chimney whose contracted wreaths are soon dissipated in this stinging air, and think of the size of their wood pile. And again I try to realize how they panted for a breath of cool air those sultry nights last summer. Recall, realize now, if you can, the hum of the mosquito.

It seems that the snow-storm of Saturday night was a remarkable one, reaching many hundred miles along the coast. It is said that some thousands passed the night in the cars. — The kitchen windows were magnificent last night with their frost sheaves, surpassing any cut or ground glass.

I love to wade and flounder through the swamp now, these bitter cold days, when the snow lies deep on the ground, and I need travel but little way from the town to get to a Nova Zembla solitude, to wade through the swamps, all snowed up, untracked by man, into which the fine dry snow is still drifting till it is even with the tops of the water andromeda, and half way up the high blueberry bushes. I penetrate to islets inaccessible in summer, my feet slumping to the sphagnum far out of sight beneath, where the alderberry glows yet, . . . and perchance a single tree sparrow lisps by my side; where there are few tracks even of wild animals. Perhaps only a mouse or two have burrowed up by the side of some twig, and hopped away in straight lines on the surface of the light, deep snow, as if too timid to delay, to another hole by the side of another bush, and a few rabbits have run in a path amid the blueberries and alders about the edge of the swamp. This is instead of a Polar Expedition, and going after Franklin. There is but little life and the objects are few, it is true. We are reduced to admire buds, even like the partridges, and bark, like the rabbits and mice, the great red and forward looking buds of the azalea, the plump red ones of the blueberry, and the fine, sharp red ones of the panicled andromeda sleeping along

its stem, the speckled black alder, the rapid growing dogwood, the pale brown and cracked blueberry, etc. Even a little shining bud which lies sleeping behind its twig, perhaps half concealed by ice, is object enough. I feel myself upborne on the andromeda bushes beneath the snow as on a springy basket-work. Then down I go, up to my middle in the deep but silent snow, which has no sympathy with my mishap. Beneath its level, how many sweet berries will be hanging next August! — This freezing weather I see the pumps dressed in mats and old clothes, or bundled up in straw. Fortunate he who has placed his cottage on the south side of some high hill or some dense wood, and not in the middle of the Great Fields where there is no hill nor tree to shelter it. There the winds have full sweep, and such a day as yesterday, the house is but a fence to stay the drifting snow. Such is the piercing wind, no man loiters between his house and barn. The road track is soon obliterated, and the path which leads round to the back of the house, dug this morning, is filled up again, and you can no longer see the tracks of the master of the house who only an hour ago took refuge in some half-subterranean apartment there. You know only by some white wreath of smoke from his chimney, which is at once snapped up by the hungry air, that he sits

warming his wits there within, studying the almanac to learn how long it is before spring. But his neighbor, who, only half a mile off, has placed his house in the shelter of a wood, is digging out of a drift his pile of roots and stumps, hauled from the swamp, at which he regularly dulls his axe and saw, reducing them to billets that will fit into his stove. With comparative safety and even comfort he labors at this mine. As for the other, the windows give no sign of inhabitants, for they are frosted over as if they were ground glass, and the curtains are down beside. . . . No sound issues from within. It remains only to examine the chimney's nostrils. I look very sharp, and fancy that I see some smoke against the sky there, but this is deceptive, for as we are accustomed to walk up to an empty fire-place and imagine that we feel some heat from it, so I have convinced myself that I saw smoke issuing from the chimney of a house which had not been inhabited for twenty years. I had so vivid an idea of smoke that no painter could have matched my imagination. It was as if the spirits of the former inhabitants revisiting their old haunts were once more boiling a spiritual kettle below.

Jan. 10, 1858. The N. side of Walden is a warm walk in sunny weather. If you are sick and despairing, go forth in winter and see the

red alder catkins dangling at the extremity of the twigs all in the wintry air, like long, hard mulberries, promising a new spring and the fulfillment of all our hopes. We prize any tenderness, any softening in the winter, catkins, birds' nests, insect life, etc. The most I get, perchance, is the sight of a mulberry-like red catkin, which I know has a dormant life in it seemingly greater than my own.

Jan. 10, 1859. . . . The alder is one of the prettiest trees and shrubs in the winter. It is evidently so full of life with its conspicuously pretty red catkins dangling from it on all sides. It seems to dread the winter less than other plants. It has a certain heyday and cheery look, less stiff than most, with more of the flexible grace of summer. With those dangling clusters of red catkins which it switches in the face of winter, it brags for all vegetation. It is not daunted by the cold, but still hangs gracefully over the frozen stream.

I come across to the road S. of the hill, to see the pink on the snow-clad hill at sunset. . . . I walk back and forth in the road waiting for its appearance. The windows on the skirts of the village reflect the setting sun with intense brilliancy, a dazzling glitter, it is so cold. Standing thus on one side of the hill, I begin to see a pink light reflected

from the snow there about fifteen minutes before the sun sets. This gradually deepens to purple and violet in some places, and the pink is very distinct, especially when, after looking at the simply white snow on other sides, you turn your eyes to the hill. Even after all direct sunlight is withdrawn from the hill-top, as well as from the valley in which you stand, you see, if you are prepared to discern it, a faint and delicate tinge of purple and violet there. This was on a very clear and cold evening when the thermometer was —6°.

This is one of the phenomena of the winter sunset, this distinct pink light reflected from the brows of snow-clad hills on one side of you, as you are facing the sun.

The cold rapidly increases, and it is —14° in the evening. I hear the ground crack with a very loud sound and a great jar, in the evening and in the course of the night several times. It is once as loud and heavy as the explosion of the Acton powder mills.

Jan. 11, 1839.

THE THAW.

I saw the civil sun drying earth's tears,
Her tears of joy that only faster flowed.

Fain would I stretch me by the highway side
To thaw and trickle with the melting snow,
That mingled, soul and body, with the tide,
I too may through the pores of nature flow.

Jan. 11, 1852. . . . The glory of these afternoons, though the sky may be mostly overcast, is in the ineffably clear blue, or else pale greenish-yellow patches of sky in the west just before sunset. The whole cope of heaven seen at once is never so elysian; windows to heaven, the heavenward windows of the earth. The end of the day is truly Hesperian. . . .

We sometimes find ourselves living fast, unprofitably, and coarsely even, as we catch ourselves eating our meals in unaccountable haste. But in one sense we cannot live too leisurely. Let me not live as if time was short. Catch the pace of the seasons, have leisure to attend to every phenomenon of nature, and to entertain every thought that comes to you. Let your life be a leisurely progress through the realms of nature, even in guest-quarters. . . .

The question is not where did the traveler go? What places did he see? It would be difficult to choose between places. But who was the traveler? How did he travel? How genuine an experience did he get? For traveling is, in the main, like as if you stayed at home, and then the question is, How do you live and conduct yourself at home? What I mean is that it might be hard to decide whether I would travel to Lake Superior or Labrador or Florida. Perhaps none would be worth the while if I went

by the usual mode. But if I travel in a simple, primitive, original manner, standing in a truer relation to men and nature, travel away from the old and commonplace, get some honest experience of life, if only out of my feet and homesickness, then it becomes less important whither I go or how far. I so see the world from a new and more commanding point of view. Perhaps it is easier to live a true and natural life while traveling, as one can move about less awkwardly than he can stand still.

Jan. 11, 1857. . . . For some years past I have partially offered myself as a lecturer, have been advertised as such several years. Yet I had but two or three invitations to lecture in a year, and some years none at all. I congratulate myself on having been permitted to stay at home thus. I am so much richer for it. I do not see what I should have got of much value, except money, by going about. But I do see what I should have lost. It seems to me that I have a longer and more liberal lease of life thus. I cannot afford to be telling my experience, especially to those who perhaps will take no interest in it. I wish to be getting experience. You might as well recommend to a bear to leave his hollow tree and run about all winter scratching at all the hollow trees in the woods. He would be leaner in the spring than if he had

stayed at home and sucked his claws. As for the lecture-goers, it is none of their business what I think. I perceive that most make a great account of their relations, more or less personal or direct, to many men, coming before them as lecturers, writers, or public men. But all this is impertinent and unprofitable to me. I never get recognized, nor was recognized by a crowd of men. I was never assured of their existence, nor they of mine.

There was wit and even poetry in the negro's answer to the man who tried to persuade him that the slaves would not be obliged to work in heaven, — "Oh, you g' way, Massa, I know better. If dere 's no work for cullered folks up dar, dey 'll *make* some fur 'em, and if dere 's nuffin better to do, dey 'll make 'em *shub de clouds along*. You can't fool dis chile, Massa."

I was describing, the other day, my success in solitary and distant woodland walking outside the town. I do not go there to get my dinner, but to get that sustenance which dinners only preserve me to enjoy, without which dinners are a vain repetition. But how little men can help me in this, only by having a kindred experience. Of what use to tell them of my happiness. Thus, if ever we have anything important to say, it might be introduced with the remark, it is nothing to you, in particular. It is none of

your business, I know. That is what might be called going into *good society*. I never chanced to meet with any man so cheering and elevating and encouraging, so infinitely suggestive as the stillness and solitude of the Well Meadow field. Men even think me odd and perverse because I do not prefer their society to this Nymph or Wood God rather. But I have tried them. I have sat down with a dozen of them together in a club. . . .

They did not inspire me. One or another abused our ears with many words and a few thoughts which were not theirs. There was very little genuine goodness apparent. We are such hollow pretenders. I lost my time. But out there! Who shall criticise that companion? It is like the hone to the knife. I bathe in that element, and am cleansed of all social impurities. I become a witness with unprejudiced senses to the order of the universe. *There* is nothing petty or impertinent, none to say, "See what a great man I am!" *There*, chiefly, and not in the society of wits, am I cognizant of wit. Shall I prefer a part, an infinitely small fraction to the whole. There I get my underpinnings laid and repaired, cemented, leveled. There is my country club. We dine at the sign of the Shrub Oak, the new Albion House.

I demand of my companion some evidence

that he has traveled farther than to the sources of the Nile, that he has been *out of town*, *out of the house*, not that he can tell a good story, but that he can keep a good silence. Has he attended to a silence more significant than any story? Did he ever get out of the road which all men and fools travel? You call yourself a great traveler, perhaps, but can you get beyond the influence of a certain class of ideas?

Jan. 11, 1859. At 6 A. M. —22°, and how much lower I know not, the mercury [?] in our thermometer having gone into the bulb, but that is said to be the lowest. Going to Boston to-day, I find that the cracking of the ground last night is the subject of conversation in the cars, and that it was quite general. I see many cracks in Cambridge and Concord. It would appear, then, that the *ground cracks on the advent of very severe cold weather.* I had not heard it before this winter. It was so when I went to Amherst a winter or two ago.

Jan. 11, 1861. Horace Mann brings me the contents of a crow's stomach in alcohol. It was killed in the village within a day or two. It is quite a mass of frozen-thawed apple pulp and skin, with a good many pieces of skunk-cabbage berries, a quarter of an inch or less in diameter, and commonly showing the pale brown or blackish outside, interspersed, looking like bits of

acorns, never a whole or even half a berry, and two little bones as of frogs, or mice, or tadpoles. Also a street pebble, a quarter of an inch in diameter, hard to be distinguished in appearance from the cabbage seeds.

Jan. 12, 1852. . . . I sometimes think that I may go forth and walk hard and earnestly, and live a more substantial life, get a glorious experience, be much abroad in heat and cold, day and night, live more, expend more atmospheres, be weary often, etc., etc. But then swiftly the thought comes to me, Go not so far out of your way for a truer life, keep strictly onward in that path alone which your genius points out, do the things which lie nearest to you, but which are difficult to do, live a purer, a more thoughtful and laborious life, more true to your friends and neighbors, more noble and magnanimous, and that will be better than a wild walk. To live in relations of truth and sincerity with men is to dwell in a frontier country. What a wild and unfrequented wilderness that would be! What Saguenays of magnanimity that might be explored! — Men talk about traveling this way and that, as if seeing were all in the eyes, and a man could sufficiently report what he stood bodily before, when the seeing depends ever on the being. All report of travel is the report of victory or defeat, of a contest with every event

and phenomenon, and how you come out of it. A blind man who possesses inward truth and consistency will see more than one who has faultless eyes, but no serious and laborious, or strenuous soul to look through them. As if the eyes were the only part of the man that traveled. Men convert their property into cash, ministers fall sick to obtain the assistance of their parishes, all chaffer with sea-captains, etc., as if the whole object were to get conveyed to some part of the world, a pair of eyes merely. A telescope conveyed to and set up at the Cape of Good Hope at great expense, and only a Bushman to look through it. Nothing like a little activity, called life, if it were only walking much in a day, to keep the eye in good order, no such collyrium.

Jan. 12, 1855. P. M. To Flint's Pond *via* Minott's meadow. After a spitting of snow in the forenoon, I see the blue sky here and there. The sun is coming out. It is still and warm. The earth is two thirds bare. I walk along the Mill Brook below Emerson's, looking into it for some life. Perhaps what most moves us in winter is some reminiscence of far-off summer. . . . What beauty in the running brooks! what life! what society! The cold is merely superficial. It is summer still at the core. Far, far within, it is in the cawing of the crow, the

crowing of the cock, the warmth of the sun on our backs. I hear faintly the cawing of a crow far, far away, echoing from some unseen woodside, as if deadened by the spring-like vapor which the sun is drawing from the ground. It mingles with the slight murmur of the village, the sound of children at play, as one stream empties gently into another, and the wild and tame are one. What a delicious sound! It is not merely crow calling to crow, for it speaks to me too. I am part of one great creature with him. If he has voice, I have ears. I can hear when he calls, and have engaged not to shoot or stone him, if he will caw to me each spring. On the one hand, it may be, is the sound of children at school saying their a, b, abs; on the other, far in the wood-fringed horizon, the cawing of crows from their blessed eternal vacation, out at their long recess, children who have got dismissed, while the vapor, as incense, goes up from all the fields of the spring (if it were spring). Bless the Lord, O my soul, bless Him for wildness, for crows that will not alight within gunshot, and bless Him for hens, too, that croak and cackle in the yard.

Jan. 12, 1859. Mr. Farmer brings me a hawk which he thinks has caught thirty or forty of his chickens since summer, for he has lost so many, and he has seen a hawk like this catch

some of them. Thinks he has seen this same one sitting a long time upright on a tree, high or low, about his premises, and when at length a hen or this year's chicken had strayed far from the rest, he skimmed along and picked it up without pausing, and bore it off, the chicken not having seen him approaching. He found the hawk caught by one leg and frozen to death in a trap which he had set for mink by a spring and baited with fish. — This one measures nineteen by forty-two inches, and is, according to Wilson and Nuttall, a young *Falco lineatus*, or red-shouldered hawk. It might as well be called the red or rusty-breasted hawk. According to the "Birds of Long Island," mine is the old bird.(?) Nuttall says it lives on frogs, crayfish, etc., and does not go far north, not even to Massachusetts, he thought. Its note, Kee-oo. He never saw one soar, at least in winter. . . .

Farmer says that he saw what he calls the common hen hawk, soaring high, with apparently a chicken in its claws, while a young hawk circled beneath, when the former suddenly let drop the chicken. But the young one failing to catch it, he shot down like lightning, and caught and bore off the falling chicken before it reached the earth.

Jan. 12, 1860. . . . I go forth to walk on the Hill at 3 P. M. Thermometer about +30°.

It is a very beautiful and spotless snow now, it having just ceased falling. You are struck by its peculiar tracklessness, as if it were a thick, white blanket just spread. As it were, each snow-flake lies as it first fell, or there is a regular gradation from the denser bottom up to the surface which is perfectly light, and as it were fringed with the last flakes that fell. This was a star snow, dry, but the stars of considerable size. It lies up light as down. When I look closely, it seems to be chiefly composed of crystals in which the six rays or leaflets are more or less perfect, with a cottony powder intermixed. It is not yet in the least melted by the sun. The sun is out very bright and pretty warm, and going from it, I see a myriad sparkling points scattered over the surface of the snow, little mirror-like facets, which on examination I find to be, each, one of those star wheels, more or less entire, from one eighth to one third of an inch in diameter, which has fallen in the proper position, reflecting an intensely bright little sun, as if it were a thin and uninterrupted scale of nica. Such is the glitter or sparkle on the surface of such a snow freshly fallen when the sun comes out, and you walk from it, the points of light constantly changing. I suspect that these are good evidence of the freshness of the snow. The sun and wind have not yet destroyed these delicate reflectors. . . .

As I stand by the hemlocks, I am greeted by the lively and unusually prolonged *tche-de-de de-de-de* of a little flock of chickadees. The snow has ceased falling, the sun comes out, and it is warm and still, and this flock of chickadees, feeling the influences of this genial season, have begun to flit amid the snow-covered fans of the hemlocks, jarring down the snow, for there are hardly bare twigs enough for them to rest on, or they plume themselves in some sunny recess on the sunny side of the tree, only pausing to utter their *tche-de-de-de.*

Jan. 13, 1841. We should offer up our perfect (τέλεια) thoughts to the gods daily. Our writing should be hymns and psalms. Who keeps a journal is purveyor to the gods. There are two sides to every sentence. The one is contiguous to me, but the other faces the gods, and no man ever fronted it. When I utter a thought, I launch a vessel which never sails in my harbor more, but goes sheer off into the deep. Consequently it demands a godlike insight, a fronting view, to read what was greatly written.

Jan. 13, 1852. —— told me this afternoon of a white pine in Carlisle which the owner was offered thirty dollars for and refused. He had bought the lot for the sake of the tree which he left standing.

Here I am on the Cliffs at half-past three or four o'clock. The snow more than a foot deep over all the land. Few, if any, leave the beaten paths. A few clouds are floating overhead, downy and dark. Clear sky and bright sun, yet no redness. Remarkable, yet admirable, moderation that this should be confined to the morning and evening. Greeks were they who did it. A mother-o'-pearl tint at the utmost they will give you at mid-day, and this but rarely. Singular enough! twenty minutes later, looking up, I saw a long, light-textured cloud, stretching from N. to S. with a dunnish mass and an enlightened border, with its under edge toward the west all beautiful mother-o'-pearl, as remarkable as a rainbow, stretching over half the heavens, and underneath it in the W. were flitting mother-o'-pearl clouds which change their loose-textured form, and melt rapidly away, never any so fast, even while I write. Before I can complete this sentence, I look up and they are gone, like smoke or rather the steam from the engine in the winter air. Even a considerable cloud, like a fabulous Atlantis or unfortunate Isle in the Hesperian sea, is dissolved and dispersed in a minute or two, and nothing is left but the pure ether. Then another comes by magic, is born out of the pure blue empyrean, with beautiful mother-o'-pearl tints, where not a shred of vapor

was to be seen before, not enough to stain a glass, or polished steel blade. It grows more light and porous, the blue deeps are seen through it here and there, only a few flocks are left, and now these, too, have disappeared, and no one knows whither it is gone. You are compelled to look at the sky, for the earth is invisible. . . .

Why can't I go to his office and talk with ——, and learn his facts? But I should impose a certain restraint on him. We are strictly confined to our men, to whom we give liberty. . . .

We forget to strive and aspire, to do better even than is expected of us. I cannot stay to be congratulated. I would leave the world behind me. We must withdraw from our flatterers, even from our friends. They drag us down. It is rare that we use our thinking faculty as resolutely as an Irishman his spade. To please our friends and relatives we turn out our silver ore in cart-loads, while we neglect to work our mines of gold known only to ourselves, far up in the Sierras, where we pulled up a bush in our mountain walk, and saw the glittering treasure. Let us return thither. Let it be the price of our freedom to make that known.

Jan. 13, 1854. . . . In the deep hollow this side of Brittan's Camp, I heard a singular buzzing sound from the ground exactly like that of a large

fly or bee in a spider's web. I kneeled down and with pains traced it to a small bare spot as big as my hand amid the snow, and searched there amid the grass and stubble for several minutes, putting the grass aside with my fingers, till, when I got nearest to the spot, not knowing but I might be stung, I used a stick. The sound was incessant, like that of a large fly in agony. But though it made my ears ache, and I had my stick directly on the spot, I could find neither prey nor oppression. At length I found that I interrupted or changed the tone with my stick, and so traced it to a few spires of dead grass, occupying about one quarter of an inch in diameter, and standing in the melted snow water. When I bent these one side, it produced a duller and baser tone. It was a sound issuing from the earth, and as I stooped over it, the thought came over me that it might be the first puling, infantine cry of an earthquake, which would erelong ingulf me. Perhaps it was air confined under the frozen ground, now expanded by the thaw, and escaping upward through the water by a hollow grass stem. I left it after ten minutes buzzing as loudly as at first. Could hear it more than a rod away.

Schoolcraft says [of Rhode Island], "The present name is derived from the Dutch, who called it Roode Eylant (Red Island) from the

autumnal color of its foliage." (Coll. R. I. Hist. Soc. vol. iii.)

Jan. 13, 1856. . . . Took to pieces a pensile nest which I found . . . probably a vireo's, may be a red-eye's. In our workshops we pride ourselves on discovering a use for what had been previously regarded as waste, but how partial and accidental our economy compared with nature's. In nature nothing is wasted. Every decayed leaf and twig and fibre is only the better fitted to serve in some other department, and all at last are gathered in her compost heap. What a wonderful genius it is that leads the vireo to select the tough fibre of the inner bark, instead of the more brittle grasses, for its basket, the elastic pine needles and the twigs curved as they dried, to give it form, and, as I suppose, the silk of cocoons, etc., to bind it together with. I suspect that extensive use is made of these abandoned cocoons by the birds, and they, if anybody, know where to find them. There were at least seven materials used in constructing this nest, and the bird visited as many distinct localities many times, always with the purpose or design of finding some particular one of these materials, as much as if it had said to itself, "Now I will go and get some old hornet's nest from one of those that I saw last fall, down in the maple swamp, perhaps thrust my

bill into them, or some silk from those cocoons I saw this morning."

Jan. 13, 1857. I hear one thrumming a guitar below stairs. It reminds me of moments that I have lived. What a comment on our life is the least strain of music! It lifts me above all the dust and mire of the universe. I soar or hover with clean skirts over the field of my life. It is ever life within life in concentric spheres. The field wherein I toil or rust at any time is at the same time the field for such different kinds of life! The farmer's boy or hired man has an instinct which tells him as much indistinctly; hence his dreams and his restlessness, hence even it is that he wants money to realize his dream with. The identical field where I am leading my humdrum life, let but a strain of music be heard there, is seen to be the field of some unrecorded crusade or tournament, the thought of which excites in us an ecstasy of joy. The way in which I am affected by this faint thrumming advertises me that there is still some health and immortality in the springs of me. What an elixir is this sound! I who but lately came and went and lived under — *a dish cover* — live now under the heavens. It releases me, bursts my bonds. Almost all, perhaps all, our life is, speaking comparatively, a stereotyped despair, *i. e.*, we never at any time realize

the full grandeur of our destiny. We habitually, forever and ever, underrate our fate. Talk of infidels, why, all of the race of man, except in the rarest moments when they are lifted above themselves by an ecstasy, are infidels. With the very best disposition, what does my belief amount to? This poor, timid, unenlightened, thick-skinned creature, what *can* it believe? I am, of course, hopelessly ignorant and unbelieving until some divinity stirs within me. Ninety-nine one hundredths of our lives we are mere hedgers and ditchers, but from time to time we meet with reminders of our destiny. — We hear the kindred vibrations, music! and we put out our dormant feelers into the limits of the universe. We attain to wisdom that passeth understanding. The stable continents undulate. The hard and fixed becomes fluid.

> "Unless above himself he can
> Erect himself, how poor a thing is man."

When I *hear* music, I fear no danger. I am invulnerable. I see no foe. I am related to the earliest times, and to the latest.

There are infinite degrees of life, from that which is next to sleep and death to that which is forever awake and immortal. We must not confound man with man. We cannot conceive of a greater difference than that between the life of one man and that of another. I am con-

strained to believe that the mass of men are never so lifted above themselves that their destiny is seen to be transcendently beautiful and grand.

Jan. 13, 1858. . . . At Jonathan Buffum's, Lynn. Lecture in John B. Alley's parlor. Mr. J. Buffum describes to me ancient wolf traps, made probably by the early settlers in Lynn, perhaps after an Indian model; one some two miles from the shore near Saugus, another more northerly, holes say seven feet deep, about as long, and some three feet wide, stoned up very smoothly and perhaps converging a little, so that the wolf could not get out. — Tradition says that a wolf and a squaw were one morning found in the same hole, staring at each other.

Jan. 13, 1860. . . . Farmer says that he remembers his father saying that as he stood in a field once, he saw a hawk soaring above and eying something on the ground. Looking round, he saw a weasel there eying the hawk. Just then the hawk stooped, and the weasel at the same instant sprang upon him. Up went the hawk with the weasel, but by and by began to come down as fast as he went up, rolling over and over, till he struck the ground. His father going to him, raised him up, when out hopped the weasel from under his wing, and ran off, none the worse for his fall.

Jan. 14, 1852. . . . I love to see now a cock of deep, reddish meadow hay full of ferns and other meadow plants of the coarsest kind. My imagination supplies the green and the hum of bees. What a memento of summer such a hay-cock! To stand beside one covered with snow in winter through which the dry meadow plants peep out! And yet our hopes survive. . . .

As usual, there was no blueness in the ruts and crevices of the snow to-day. What kind of atmosphere does this require? When I observed it the other day, it was a rather moist air, some snow falling, the sky completely overcast, and the weather not very cold. It is one of the most interesting phenomena of the winter.

Jan. 14, 1854. If the writers of the brazen age are most suggestive to thee, confine thyself to them, and leave those of the Augustan age to dust and the bookworms. . . .

Cato makes the vineyard of first importance to a farm; second, a well-watered garden; third, a willow plantation (*salictum*); fourth, an olive yard (*oletum*); fifth, a meadow, or grass ground (*pratum*); sixth, a grain field or tillage (*campus frumentarius*); seventh, a wood for fuel (?) (*silva cædua*); Varro speaks of planting and cultivating this; eighth, an *arbustum;* Columella says it is a plantation of elms, and for

vines to rest on; ninth, a wood that yields mast (*glandaria silva*). He says elsewhere the *arbustum* yields *ligna et virgæ*.

He says, "In early manhood, the master of a family must study to plant his ground. As for building, he must think a long time about it (*diu cogitare*). He must not think about planting, but do it. When he gets to be thirty-six years old, then let him build, if he has his ground planted. So build that the villa may not have to seek the farm, nor the farm the villa." This contains sound advice, as pertinent now as ever. . . . "If you have done one thing late, you will do all your work late," says Cato to the farmer. — They raised a sallow (*salicem*), to tie vines with. Ground subject to fogs is called *nebulosus*. . . . Oxen "must have muzzles (or little baskets, *fiscellas*) that they may not go in quest of grass (*ne herbam sectentur*), when they plow."

Jan. 14, 1855. Skated to Baker Farm with a rapidity which astonished myself, before the wind, feeling the rise and fall (the water having settled in the suddenly cold night) which I had not time to see. . . . A man feels like a new creature, a deer perhaps, moving at this rate. He takes new possession of nature in the name of his own majesty. There was I, and there, and there, as Mercury went down the Idæan

mountains. I judged that in a quarter of an hour I was three and one half miles from home without having made any particular exertion.

Jan. 14, 1857. Up Assabet on ice. . . . I notice on the black willows, and also on the alders and white maples overhanging the stream, numerous dirty-white cocoons, about an inch long, attached by their sides to the base of the recent twigs, and disguised by dry leaves curled about them, a sort of fruit which these trees bear now. The leaves are not attached to the twigs, but artfully arranged about, and fastened to the cocoons. Almost every little cluster of leaves contains a cocoon, apparently of one species, so that often when you would think the trees were retaining their leaves, it is not the trees, but the caterpillars that have retained them. I do not see a cluster of leaves on a maple, unless on a dead twig, but it conceals a cocoon. Yet I cannot find one alive. They are all crumbled within. The black willows retain very few of their narrow curled leaves here and there, like the terminal leaflet of a fern. The maples and alders scarcely any ever. Yet these few are just enough to withdraw attention from those which surround the cocoons. What kind of understanding was there between the mind that determined that these leaves should hang on during the winter

and that of the worm that fastened a few of these leaves to its cocoon in order to disguise it? I thus walk along the edge of the trees and bushes which overhang the stream, gathering the cocoons which probably were thought to be doubly secure here. These cocoons, of course, were attached before the leaves had fallen. Almost every one is already empty, or contains only the relics of a nymph. It has been attacked and devoured by some foe. These numerous cocoons attached to the twigs overhanging the stream in the still and biting winter day suggest a certain fertility in the river borders, impart a kind of life to them, and so are company to me. There is so much more life than is suspected in the most solitary and dreary scene. They are as much as the lisping of a chickadee.

Jan. 14, 1858. Mr. Buffum says that in 1817 or 1819 he saw the sea-serpent at Swampscott, and so did several hundred others. He was to be seen off and on for some time. There were many people on the beach the first time in carriages partly in the water, and the serpent came so near that they, thinking he might come ashore, involuntarily turned their horses to the shore, as with a general consent, and this movement caused him to sheer off also. The road from Boston was lined with people directly, coming to see the monster. Prince came with

his spy-glass, saw, and printed his account of him. Buffum says he has seen him twenty times; once alone from the rocks at Little Nahant, where he passed along close to the shore just beneath the surface, and within fifty or sixty feet of him, so that he could have touched him with a very long pole, if he had dared to. Buffum is about sixty, and it should be said, as affecting the value of his evidence, that he is a firm believer in Spiritualism.

Jan. 14, 1860. . . . It is a mild day, and I notice, what I have not observed for some time, that blueness of the air only to be perceived in a mild day. I see it between me and woods half a mile distant. The softening of the air amounts to this. The mountains are quite invisible. You come forth to see this great blue presence lurking about the woods and the horizon.

Jan. 15, 1838. After all that has been said in praise of the Saxon race, we must allow that our blue-eyed and fair-haired ancestors were originally an ungodly and reckless crew.

Jan. 15, 1852. . . . I do not know but the poet is he who generates poems. By continence he rises to creation on a higher level, a supernatural level. . . .

For the first time this winter I notice snow fleas this afternoon in Walden wood. Wher-

ever I go, they are to be seen, especially in the deepest ruts and foot-tracks. Their number is almost infinite. It is a rather warm and moist afternoon, and feels like rain. I suppose that some peculiarity in the weather has called them forth from the bark of the trees.

It is good to see Minott's hens pecking and scratching the ground. What never-failing health they suggest! Even the sick hen is so naturally sick, like a green leaf turning to brown. No wonder men love to have hens about them, and hear their creaking note. They are even laying eggs from time to time still, the undespairing race!

Jan. 15, 1853. . . . Mrs. Ripley told me this P. M. that Russell had decided that that green (and sometimes yellow) dust on the underside of stones in walls was a decaying state of *Lepraria chlorina*, a lichen; the yellow another species of Lepraria. I have long known this dust, but as I did not know the name of it, *i. e.*, what others called it, and therefore could not conveniently speak of it, it has suggested less to me, and I have made less use of it. I now first feel as if I had got hold of it.

Jan. 15, 1857. . . . As I passed the south shed at the depot, observed what I thought at first a tree sparrow on the wood in the shed, a mere roof open at the sides, under which several men

were at that time employed sawing wood with a horse-power. Looking closer, I saw, to my surprise, that it must be a song sparrow, it having the usual marks on its breast, and no bright chestnut crown. The snow is nine or ten inches deep, and it appeared to have taken refuge in this shed where was much bare ground exposed by removing the wood. When I advanced, instead of flying away, it concealed itself in the wood, just as it often dodges behind a wall.

What is there in music that it should so stir our deeps? We are all ordinarily in a state of desperation. Such is our life, it ofttimes drives us to suicide. To how many, perhaps to most, life is barely tolerable, and if it were not for the fear of death or of dying, what a multitude would immediately commit suicide. But let us hear a strain of music, and we are at once advertised of a life which no man had told us of, which no preacher preaches. Suppose I try to describe faithfully the prospect which a strain of music exhibits to me. The field of my life becomes a boundless plain, glorious to tread, with no death nor disappointment at the end of it. All meanness and trivialness disappear. I become adequate to my deed. No particulars survive this expansion. Persons do not survive it. In the light of this strain there is no thou nor I. We are actually lifted above ourselves.

The tracks of the mice near the head of Well Meadow were particularly interesting. There was a level of pure snow there, unbroken by bushes or grass, about four rods across, and here were nine tracks of mice running across it, from the bushes on this side to those on the other, the tracks quite near together, but repeatedly crossing each other at very acute angles, though each particular course was generally quite direct. The snow was so light that only one distinct track was made by all four of the feet, . . . but the tail left a very distinct mark. A single track stretching away almost straight, sometimes half a dozen rods over the unspotted snow, is very handsome, like a chain of a new pattern, and suggests an airy lightness in the body that impressed it. Though there may have been but one or two here, the tracks suggest quite a little company that had gone gadding over to their neighbors under the opposite bush. Such is the delicacy of the impression on the surface of the lightest snow, where other creatures sink, and night, too, being the season when these tracks are made, they remind me of a fairy revel. It is almost as good as if the actors were here. I can easily imagine all the rest. Hopping is expressed by the tracks themselves. Yet I should like much to see, by broad daylight, a company of these revelers hopping

over the snow. There is a still life in America that is little observed or dreamed of. . . . How snug they are somewhere under the snow now, not to be thought of, if it were not for these pretty tracks. For a week, or fortnight even, of pretty still weather, the tracks will remain to tell of the nocturnal adventures of a tiny mouse. . . . So it was so many thousands of years before Gutenberg invented printing with *his* types, and so it will be so many thousands of years after his types are forgotten perchance. The deer-mouse will be printing in the snow of Well Meadow to be read by a new race of men.

Jan. 16, 1838. Man is like a cork which no tempest can sink, but it will float securely to its haven at last.

The world is never the less beautiful, though viewed through a chink or knot-hole.

Jan. 16, 1852. I see that to some men their relation to mankind is all important. It is fatal in their eyes to outrage the opinions and customs of their fellow-men. Failure and success are therefore never proved by them by absolute and universal tests. I feel myself not so vitally related to my fellow-men. I impinge on them but by a point on one side. It is not a Siamese-twin ligature that binds me to them. It is unsafe to defer so much to mankind and the opinions of society, for these are always, and without

exception, heathenish and barbarous, seen from the heights of philosophy. A wise man sees as clearly the heathenism and barbarity of his own countrymen as those of the nations to whom his countrymen send missionaries. The Englishman and American are subject equally to many national superstitions with the Hindoos and Chinese. My countrymen are to me foreigners. I have but little more sympathy with them than with the mob of India or of China. All nations are remiss in their duties, and fall short of their standards. Madame Pfeiffer says of the Parsees or Fire-worshipers in Bombay, who should all have been on hand on the esplanade to greet the first rays of the sun, that she found only a few here and there, and some did not make their appearance till nine o'clock. — I see no important difference between the assumed gravity and bought funeral sermon of the parish clergyman and the howlings and strikings of the breast of the hired mourning women of the East.

Bill Wheeler had two clumps for feet, and progressed slowly by short steps, having frozen his feet once, as I understood. Him I have been sure to meet once in five years, progressing into the town on his stubs, holding the middle of the road, as if he drove the invisible herd of the world before him, especially on a military

day; out of what confines, whose hired man having been, in what remote barn having quartered all these years, I never knew. He seemed to belong to a different caste from other men, and reminded me both of the Indian pariah and martyr. I understood that somebody was found to give him his drink for the few chores he could do. His meat was never referred to, he had so sublimed his life. One day since this, not long ago, I saw in my walk a kind of shelter, such as woodmen might use, in the woods by the Great Meadows, made of meadow hay cast over a rude frame. Thrusting my head in at a hole, as I am wont to do in such cases, I found Bill Wheeler there curled up asleep on the hay, who, being suddenly wakened from a sound sleep, rubbed his eyes, and inquired if I found any game, thinking I was sporting. I came away reflecting much on that man's life, how he communicated with none, how now, perchance, he did chores for none, how low he lived, perhaps from a deep principle, that he might be some mighty philosopher, greater than Socrates or Diogenes, simplifying life, returning to nature, having turned his back on towns, how many things he had put off, luxuries, comforts, human society, even his feet, wrestling with his thoughts. I felt even as Diogenes when he saw the boy drinking out of his hands, and threw away his cup.

Here was one who went alone, did no work, and had no relatives that I knew of, was not ambitious that I could see, did not depend on the good opinions of men. Must he not see things with an impartial eye, disinterested, as the toad observes the gardener. Perchance here is one of a sect of philosophers, the only one, so simple, so abstracted in thought and life from his contemporaries, that his wisdom is indeed foolishness to them. Who knows but in his solitary meadow hay bunk he indulges in thought only in triumphant satires on men. Who knows but here is a superiority to literature, etc., unexpressed and inexpressible, one who has resolved to humble and mortify himself as never man was humbled and mortified, whose very vividness of perception, clear knowledge, and insight have made him dumb, leaving no common consciousness and ground of parlance with his kind, or rather his unlike kindred! whose news plainly is not my news nor yours. I was not sure for a moment but here was a philosopher who had left far behind him the philosophers of Greece and India, and I envied him his advantageous point of view. I was not to be deceived by a few stupid words, of course, and apparent besottedness. It was his position and career that I contemplated.

C—— has a great respect for McKean, he stands on so low a level; says he is great for

conversation. He never says anything, hardly answers a question, but keeps at work, never exaggerates, nor uses an exclamation, and does as he agrees to. He appears to have got his shoulder to the wheel of the universe. But the other day he went greater lengths with me, as he and Barry were sawing down a pine, both kneeling of necessity. I said it was wet work for the knees in the snow. He observed, looking up at me, "We pray without ceasing."

But to return to Bill. I would have liked to know what view he took of life. — A month or two after this, as I heard, he was found dead among the brush over back of the hill, so far decomposed that his coffin was carried to his body, which was put into it with pitch-forks. — I have my misgivings still that he may have died a Brahmin's death, dwelling at the roots of trees at last, though I have since been assured that he suffered from disappointed love (was what is called love-cracked), than which can there be any nobler suffering, any fairer death for a human creature? That this made him drink, froze his feet, and did all the rest for him. Why have not the world the benefit of his long trial?

Jan. 16, 1853. . . . Trench says that "Rivals, in the primary sense of the word, are those who dwell on the banks of the same stream," or "on opposite banks," but (as he says in the case of

many words) since the use of water rights is a fruitful source of contention between such neighbors, the word has acquired this secondary sense. My friends are my *rivals* on the Concord in the primitive sense of the word. There is no strife between us respecting the use of the stream. The Concord offers many privileges, but none to quarrel about. It is a peaceful, not a brawling stream. . . . Bailey, I find, has it, "Rival [Rivalis L. . . . qui juxta eundem rivum pascit]."

Jan. 16, 1859. P. M. To Walden, and thence *via* Cassandra ponds to Fair Haven, and down river. . . . As we go southwestward through the Cassandra hollows toward the declining sun, they look successively, both by their form and color, like burnished silver shields in the midst of which we walked, looking toward the sun. The whole surface of the snow, the country over, and of the ice, as yesterday, is rough, as if composed of hailstones half melted together. . . .

The snow which three quarters conceals the Cassandra in these ponds, and every twig and trunk and blade of withered sedge, is . . . cased with ice, and accordingly, as I have said, when you go facing the sun, the hollows look like glittering shields set round with brilliants. That bent sedge in the midst of the shield, each particular blade of it, being married to an icy wire, twenty

times its size at least, shines like polished silver rings or semicircles. It must have been far more splendid yesterday before any of the ice fell off. No wonder my English companion says that our scenery is more spirited than that of England. The snow crust is rough with the wrecks of brilliants under the trees, an inch or two thick with them under many trees where they last several days.

Jan. 16, 1860. . . . I see a flock of tree sparrows picking something from the surface of the snow amid some bushes. Watching one attentively, I find that it is feeding on the very fine brown chaffy-looking seed of the panicled andromeda. It understands how to get its dinner, to make the plant *give down*, perfectly. It flies up and alights on one of the dense brown panicles of the hard berries, and gives it a vigorous shaking and beating with its claws and bill, sending down a shower of seed to the snow beneath. It lies very distinct, though fine almost as dust, on the spotless snow. It then hops down and briskly picks up from the snow what it wants. How very clean and agreeable to the imagination, and withal abundant, is this kind of food! How delicately they fare! These dry persistent seed vessels hold their crusts of bread until shaken. The snow is the white table-cloth on which they fall. . . . It

shakes down a hundred times as much as it wants, and shakes the same or another cluster after each successive snow. How bountifully nature feeds them. No wonder they come to spend the winter with us, and are at ease with regard to their food. . . . How neatly and simply they feed! This shrub grows unobserved by most, only known to botanists, and at length matures its hard, dry seed vessels, which, if noticed, are hardly supposed to contain seed; but there is no shrub or weed which is not known to some bird. Though you may have never noticed it, the tree sparrow comes from the north in the winter straight to this shrub, and confidently shakes its panicles, and then feasts on the fine shower of seeds that falls from it.

Jan. 17, 1841. A true happiness never happened, but rather is proof against all hope. I would not be a happy, that is, a lucky man, but rather a necessitated and doomed one.

After so many years of study, I have not learned my duty for one hour. I am stranded at each reflux of the tide, and I, who sailed as buoyantly on the middle deep as a ship, am as helpless as a muscle on the rock. I cannot account to myself for the hour I live. Here time has given me a dull prosaic evening, not of kin to vesper or Cynthia, a dead lapse, where Time's stream seems settling into a pool, a still-

ness not as if Nature's breath were held, but expired. Let me know that such hours as this are the wealthiest in Time's gift. It is the insufficiency of the hour which, if we but feel and understand, we shall reassert our independence then.

Jan. 17, 1852. . . . The other day as I was passing the —— house . . . with my pantaloons as usual tucked into my boots (there was no path beyond H——'s), I heard some persons in ——'s shed, but did not look round, and when I had got a rod or two beyond, I heard some one call out impudently from the shed, something like, "Holloa, Mister, what do you think of the walking?" I turned round directly, and saw three men standing in the shed. I was resolved to discomfit them, that they should prove their manhood, if they had any, and find something to say, though they had nothing before, that they should make amends to the universe by feeling cheap. They should either say to my face and eye what they had said to my back, or they should feel the meanness of having to change their tone. So I called out, looking at one, "Do you wish to speak to me, sir?" No answer. So I stepped a little nearer and repeated the question, when one replied, "Yes, sir." So I advanced with alacrity up the path they had shoveled. In the mean while one ran

into the house. I thought I had seen the nearest one. He called me by name faintly and with hesitation, and held out his hand half unconsciously, which I did not decline. I inquired gravely if he wished to say anything to me. He could only wave to the other, and mutter, "My brother." I approached him and repeated the question. He looked as if he were shrinking into a nutshell, a pitiable object he was, and looked away from me while he began to frame some business, some surveying that he might wish to have done. I saw that he was drunk, that his brother was ashamed of him, and I turned my back on him in the outset of this indirect and drunken apology. . . .

In proportion as I have celestial thoughts is the necessity for me to be out and behold the western sky before sunset these winter days. That is the symbol of the unclouded mind that knows neither winter nor summer. What is your thought like? That is the hue, that the purity and transparency and distance from earthly taint of my inmost mind; for whatever we see without is a symbol of something within, nd that which is farthest off is the symbol of what is deepest within. The lover of contemplation, accordingly, will gaze much into the sky. Fair thoughts and a serene mind make fair days.

The rainbow is the symbol of the triumph which succeeds to a grief that has tried us to our advantage, so that at last we can smile through our tears. It is the aspect with which we come out of the house of mourning. We have found our relief in tears. — As the skies appear to a man, so is his mind. Some see only clouds there, some prodigies and portents; some scarce look up at all, their heads, like those of the brutes, are directed towards earth. Some behold there serenity, purity, beauty ineffable. — The world run to see the panorama, while there is a panorama in the sky which few go out to see.

. . . There might be a chapter, when I speak of hens in the thawy days and spring weather on the chips, called Chickweed or Plantain.

Those western vistas through clouds to the sky show the clearest heavens, clearer and more elysian than when the whole sky is comparatively free from clouds, for then there is wont to be a vapor more generally diffused, especially near the horizon, which in cloudy days is absorbed, as it were, or collected into masses, and the vistas are clearer than the unobstructed cope of heaven.

What endless variety in the form and texture of the clouds, some fine, some coarse-grained! I saw to-night what looked like the back bone with portions of the ribs of a fossil monster.

Every form and creature is thus shadowed forth in vapor in the heavens. . . .

It appears to me that at a very early age the mind of man, perhaps at the same time with his body, ceases to be elastic. His intellectual power becomes something defined and limited. He does not think expansively, as he was wont to stretch himself in his growing days. What was flexible sap hardens into heart wood, and there is no further change. In the season of youth man seems to me capable of intellectual effort and performance which surpass all rules and bounds, as the youth lays out his whole strength without fear or prudence, and does not feel his limits. It is the transition from poetry to prose. The young man can run and leap, he has not learned exactly how far. . . . The grown man does not exceed his daily labor. He has no strength to waste.

Jan. 17, 1854. . . . Cato, prescribing a medicamentum for oxen, says, " When you see a snake's slough, take it and lay it up, that you may not have to seek it when it is wanted." This was mixed with bread, corn, etc.

He tells how to make bread and different kinds of cakes, viz., a libum, a placenta, a spira (so called because twisted like a rope, perhaps like doughnuts), scriblita (because ornamented with characters like writing), globi (globes),

etc.; tells how to make vows for your oxen with an offering to Mars, and Sylvanus in a wood, no woman to be present, or to know how it is done.

. . . If you wish to remove an ill savor from wine, he recommends to heat a brick, pitch it, and let it down by a string to the bottom of the cask, and let it remain there two days, the cask being stopped. "If you wish to know if water has been added to wine, make a little vessel of ivy wood (*materia ederacea*). Put into it the wine which you think has water in it. If it has water, the wine will run out (*effluet*); the water will remain, for a vessel of ivy wood does not hold wine."

"Make a sacrificial feast for the oxen when the pear is in blossom. Afterward begin to plow in the spring." — "That day is to be holy (*feriæ*) to the oxen, and herdsmen, and those who make the feast." They offer wine and mutton to Jupiter *Dapalis*, also to Vesta if they choose. . . .

When they thinned a consecrated grove (*lucum conlucare*, as if to let in the light to a shady place) they were to offer a hog by way of expiation, and pray the god or goddess to whom it was sacred to be propitious to them, their house, and family, and children. Should not every grove be regarded as a *lucus* or conse-

crated grove in this sense. I wish that our farmers felt some such awe when they cut down our consecrated groves.

He gives several charms to cure diseases, mere magician's words.

Jan. 17, 1860. . . . Alcott said well the other day that this was his definition of heaven, "A place where you can have a little conversation."

Jan. 18, 1841. We must expect no income beside our outgoes. We must succeed now, and we shall not fail hereafter. So soon as we begin to count the cost, the cost begins.

If our scheme is well built within, any mishap to the outbuilding will not be fatal.

The capital wanted is an entire independence of all capital but a clear conscience and a resolute will.

When we are so poor that the howling of the wind shall have a music in it, and not declare war against our property, the proprietors may well envy us. — We have been seeking riches not by a true industry or building within, but by mere accumulation, putting together what was without till it rose a heap beside us. We should rather acquire them by the utter renunciation of them. If I hold a house and land as property, am I not disinherited of sun, wind, rain, and all good beside? The richest are

only some degrees poorer than nature. It is impossible to have more property than we dispense. Genius is only as rich as it is generous. If it hoards, it impoverishes itself. What the banker sighs for, the meanest clown may have, leisure and a quiet mind.

Jan. 18, 1852. . . . I still remember those wonderful sparkles at Pelham Pond. The very sportsmen in the distance with their dogs and guns presented some surfaces on which a sparkle could impinge, such was the transparent, flashing air. It was a most exhilarating, intoxicating air, as when poets sing of the sparkling wine. . . .

What is like the peep or whistle of a bird in the midst of a winter storm?

The pines, some of them, seen through this fine driving snow, have a bluish hue.

Jan. 18, 1856. . . . P. M. To Walden, to learn the temperature of the water. . . . This is a very mild, melting winter day, but clear and bright. Yet I see the blue shadows on the snow at Walden. The snow lies very level there, about ten inches deep, and, for the most part, bears me as I go across with my hatchet. I think I never saw a more elysian blue than my shadow. I am turned into a tall blue Persian from my cap to my boots, such as no mortal dye can produce, with an amethystine hatchet in my hand. I am in raptures with my own shadow. Ou

very shadows are no longer black, but a celestial blue. This has nothing to do with cold I think, but the sun must not be too low.

I cleared a little space in the snow, which was nine or ten inches deep, over the deepest part of the pond, and cut through the ice, which was about seven inches thick. . . . The moment I reached the water, it gushed up and overflowed the ice, driving me out of this yard in the snow, where it stood at least two and one half inches deep above the ice. The thermometer indicated 33½° at top, and 34⅔° when drawn up rapidly from thirty feet beneath; so, *apparently*, it is not much warmer beneath.

Jan. 18, 1859. That wonderful frostwork of the 13th and 14th was too rare to be neglected, succeeded as it was also by two days of glaze, but having company, I lost half the advantage of it. . . .

We did not have an opportunity to see how it would look in the sun, but seen against the mist or fog, it was too fair to be remembered. The trees were the ghosts of trees appearing in their winding sheets, an intenser white against the comparatively dusky ground of the fog. I rode to Acton in the afternoon of the 13th, and I remember the wonderful avenue of these faery trees which everywhere overarched my road. The elms, from their form and size, were partic-

ularly beautiful. As far as I observed, the frostwork was deepest in the low grounds, especially on the *Salix alba* there. I learn from the papers that this phenomenon prevailed all over this part of the country, and attracted the admiration of all. The trees on Boston Common were clad in the same snow-white livery with our Musketaquid trees. . . .

Every one, no doubt, has looked with delight, holding his face low, at that beautiful frostwork which so frequently in winter mornings is seen bristling about the throat of every breathing hole in the earth's surface. In this case, the fog, the earth's breath made visible, was in such abundance that it invested all our vales and hills, and the frostwork, instead of being confined to the chinks and crannies of the earth, covered the mightiest trees, so that we, walking beneath them, had the same wonderful prospect and environment that an insect would have . . . making its way through a chink in the earth which was bristling with hoar frost. That glaze! I know what it was by my own experience; it was the frozen breath of the earth upon its beard. . . .

Take the most rigid tree, the whole effect is peculiarly soft and spirit-like, for there is no marked edge or outline. How could you draw the outline of these snowy fingers seen against the fog, without exaggeration. . . .

Hardly could the New England farmer drive to market under these trees without feeling that his sense of beauty was addressed. . . . A farmer told me in all sincerity that, having occasion to go into Walden woods in his sleigh, he thought he never saw anything so beautiful in all his life, and if there had been men there who knew how to write about it, it would have been a great occasion for them. Many times I thought that if the particular tree, commonly an elm, under which I was walking or riding were the only one like it in the country, it would be worth a journey across the continent to see it. Indeed, I have no doubt that such journeys would be undertaken on hearing a true account of it. But instead of being confined to a single tree, this wonder was as cheap and common as the air itself. Every man's wood-lot was a miracle and surprise to him, and for those who could not go far there were the trees in the street and the weeds in the yard. . . . The weeping willow with its thickened twigs seemed more precise and regularly curved than ever, and was as still as if carved from alabaster. . . .

It was remarkable that when the fog was a little thinner, so that you could see the pine woods a mile or more off, they were a distinct dark blue. — If any tree is set and stiff, it was now more stiff; if any airy and graceful, it was

now more graceful. The birches, especially, were a great ornament.

Jan. 18, 1860. . . . As I stood under Lee's Cliff, several chickadees, uttering their faint notes, came flitting near to me as usual. They are busily prying under the bark of the pitch pines, occasionally knocking off a piece, while they cling with their claws on any side of the limb. Of course they are in search of animal food, but I see one suddenly dart down to a seedless pine-seed wing on the snow, and then up again. C—— says that he saw them busy about these wings on the snow the other day, so I have no doubt that they eat this seed.

The sky in the reflection at the open reach at Hubbard's Bath is more green than in reality, and also darker blue. The clouds are blacker, and the purple more distinct.

Jan. 19, 1841. . . . Coleridge, speaking of the love of God, says, "He that loves, may be sure he was loved first." The love wherewith we are loved is already declared, and afloat in the atmosphere, and our love is only the inlet to it. It is an inexhaustible harvest, always ripe and ready for the sickle. It grows on every bush, and let not those complain of their fates who will not pluck it. We need make no beggarly demand for it, but pay the price, and depart. No transaction can be simpler. Love's

accounts are kept by single entry. When we are amiable, then is love in the gale, and in sun and shade, and day and night; and to sigh under the cold, cold moon for a love unrequited is to put a slight upon nature; the natural remedy would be to fall in love with the moon and the night, and find our love requited.

I anticipate a more thorough sympathy with nature when my thigh bones shall strew the ground like the boughs which the wind has scattered. These troublesome humors will flower into early anemones, and perhaps in the very lachrymal sinus, nourished by its juices, some young pine or oak will strike root.

What I call pain, when I speak in the spirit of a partisan, and not as a citizen of the body, would be serene being, if our interests were one. Sickness is civil war. We have no external foes. Even death will take place when I make peace with my body, and set my seal to that treaty which transcendent justice has so long required. I shall at length join interest with it.

The mind never makes a great effort without a corresponding energy of the body. When great resolves are entertained, its nerves are not relaxed, nor its limbs reclined.

Jan. 19, 1854. . . . In Josselyn's account of his voyage from London to Boston in 1638, he says, "June, the first day in the afternoon, very

thick, foggie weather, we sailed by an enchanted island," etc. This kind of remark, to be found in so many accounts of voyages, appears to be a fragment of tradition come down from the earliest account of Atlantis and its disappearance.

Varro, having enumerated certain writers on agriculture, says accidentally that they wrote "soluta ratione," *i. e.*, in prose. This suggests the difference between the looseness of prose and the precision of poetry. A perfect expression requires a particular rhythm or measure for which no other can be substituted. The prosaic is always a loose expression.

Jan. 19, 1856. Another bright winter day. P. M. To river to get some water-asclepias, to see what birds' nests are made of. . . .

As I came home through the village at 8.15 P. M., by a bright moonlight, the moon nearly full and not more than 18° from the zenith, the wind N. W. but not strong, and the air pretty cold, I saw the melon-rind arrangement of the clouds on a larger scale and more distinct than ever before. There were eight or ten courses of clouds, so broad that with equal intervals of blue sky they occupied the whole width of the heavens, broad white cirro-stratus, in perfectly regular curves from W. to E. across the whole sky. The four middle ones, occupying the greater part of the visible cope, were par-

ticularly distinct. They were all as regularly arranged as the lines on a melon, and with much straighter sides, as if cut with a knife. I hear that it attracted the attention of those who were abroad at 7 P. M., and now at 9 P. M. it is scarcely less remarkable. On one side of the heavens, N. or S., the intervals of blue look almost black by contrast. There is now, at nine, a strong wind from the N. W. Why do these bars extend east and west? Is it the influence of the sun which set so long ago? or of the rotation of the earth? The bars which I notice so often morning and evening are apparently connected with the sun at those periods.

Jan. 20, 1841. Disappointment will make us conversant with the nobler part of our nature. It will chasten us and prepare us to meet accident on higher ground the next time. As Hannibal taught the Romans the art of war, so is all misfortune only a stepping-stone to fortune. The desultory moments which are the grimmest feature of misfortune are a step before me on which I should set foot, and not stumbling-blocks in the path. To extract its whole good, I must be disappointed with the best fortune, and not be bribed by sunshine or health.

O Happiness, what is the stuff thou art made of? — Is it not gossamer and floating spider's webs? a crumpled sunbeam — a coiled

dew-line settling on some flower? What moments will not supply the reel from which thou mayst be wound off? Thou art as subtle as the pollen of flowers and the sporules of the fungi.

When I meet a person unlike me, I find myself *wholly* in the unlikeness. In what I am unlike others, in that I am.

When we ask for society, we do not want the double of ourselves, but the complement rather. Society should be additive and helpful. We would be reinforced by its alliance. True friends will know how to use each other in this respect, and never barter or exchange their common wealth, just as barter is unknown in families. They will not dabble in the general coffers, but each will put his finger into the private coffer of the other. They will be most familiar, they will be most unfamiliar, for they will be so one and single that common themes and things will have to be bandied between them, but in silence they will digest them as one mind; they will at the same time be so true and double that each will be to the other as admirable and as inaccessible as a star. When my friend comes, I view his orb "through optic glass" "at evening from the top of Fésolé." After the longest earthly period, he will still be in apogee to me. — But we should so meet ourselves as we meet our

friends, and still ever seek for ourselves in that which is above us and unlike us. So only shall we see what has been well called the light of our own countenances.

Jan. 20, 1853. . . . Ah, our indescribable winter sky, between emerald (?) and amber (?), such as summer never sees. What more beautiful or soothing to the eye than those finely divided . . . clouds, like down or loose-spread cotton batting, now reaching up from the west above my head! Beneath this a different stratum, all whose ends are curved like spray or wisps. All kinds of figures are drawn on the blue ground with this fibrous white paint.

Jan. 20, 1855. . . . In certain places, standing on their snowiest side, the woods were incredibly fair, white as alabaster. Indeed, the young pines reminded you of the purest statuary, and the stately, full-grown ones, towering around, affected you as if you stood in a Titanic sculptor's studio, so purely and delicately white, transmitting the light, their dark trunks all concealed; and in many places where the snow lay on withered oak leaves between you and the light, various delicate, fawn-colored tints blending with the white enhanced the beauty.

. . . How new all things seem! Here is a broad, shallow pool in the fields which yesterday was slush, now converted into a soft, white,

fleecy snow ice. . . . It is like the beginning of the world. There is nothing hackneyed where a new snow can come and cover all the landscape. . . . The world is not only new to the eye, but is still as at creation. Every blade and leaf is hushed, not a bird or insect is heard, only, perchance, a faint tinkling sleigh-bell in the distance. . . . The snow still adheres conspicuously to the N. W. sides of the stems of the trees, quite up to their summits, with a remarkably sharp edge in that direction. . . . It would be about as good as a compass to steer by in a cloudy day or by night. . . .

We came upon the tracks of a man and dog, which I guessed to be C.'s. Further still, . . . as I was showing to T. under a bank the single flesh-colored or pink apothecium of a Beomyces which was not covered by the snow, I saw the print of C.'s foot by its side, and knew that his eyes had rested on it that afternoon. It was about the size of a pin's head. Saw also where he had examined the lichens on the rails. . . .

Very musical and sweet now, like a horn, is the hounding of a fox-hound heard in some distant wood, while I stand listening in some far solitary and silent field.

I doubt if I can convey an idea of the appearance of the woods yesterday. As you stood in their midst, and looked round on their boughs

and twigs laden with snow, it seemed as if there could be none left to reach the ground. These countless zigzag white arms crossing each other at every possible angle completely closed up the view like a light drift within three or four rods on every side, the wintriest prospect imaginable. That snow which sifted down into the wood paths was much drier and lighter than elsewhere.

Jan. 20, 1856. In my experience I have found nothing so truly impoverishing as what is called wealth, *i. e.*, the command of greater means than you had before possessed, however few and slight still, for you thus inevitably acquire a more expensive habit of living, and even the very same necessaries and comforts cost you more than they once did. Instead of gaining, you have lost some independence, and if your income should be suddenly lessened, you would find yourself poor, though possessed of the same means which once made you rich. Within the last five years I have had the command of a little more money than in the previous five years, for I have sold some books and some lectures, yet I have not been a whit better fed or clothed or warmed or sheltered, not a whit richer, except that I have been less concerned about my living; but perhaps my life has been the less serious for it, and to balance it, I feel now that there is

a possibility of failure. Who knows but I may come upon the town, if, as is likely, the public want no more of my books or lectures, as, with regard to the last, is already the case. Before, I was much likelier to take the town upon my shoulders. That is, I have lost some of my independence on them, when they would say that I had gained an independence. If you wish to give a man a sense of poverty, give him a thousand dollars. The next hundred dollars he gets will not be worth more than ten that he used to get. Have pity on him. Withhold your gifts.

P. M. Up river. . . . It is now good walking on the river, for though there has been no thaw since the snow came, a great part of it has been converted into snow-ice by sinking the old ice beneath the water. The crust of the rest is stronger than in the fields, because the snow is so shallow and has been so moist. The river is thus an advantage as a highway, not only in summer, and when the ice is bare in winter, but even when the snow lies very deep in the fields. It is invaluable to the walker, being now, not only the most interesting, but, excepting the narrow and unpleasant track in the highway, the only practicable route. The snow never lies so deep over it as elsewhere, and, if deep, it sinks the ice and is soon converted into snow-ice to a great extent, beside being blown out of the river

valley. Neither is it drifted here. Here, where you cannot walk at all in the summer, is better walking than elsewhere in the winter. But what a different aspect has the river's brim from what it wears in summer! I do not at this moment hear an insect's hum, nor see a bird or a flower. That museum of animal and vegetable life, a meadow, is now reduced to a uniform level of white snow, with only half a dozen kinds of shrubs and weeds rising here and there above it.

Jan. 20, 1857. . . . I hear that Boston harbor froze over on the 18th down to Fort Independence.

The river has been frozen everywhere except at the very few swiftest places since about December 18th, and *everywhere* since about January 1st.

At R. W. E.'s this evening at about 6 P. M., I was called out to see E.'s cave in the snow. It was a hole about two and a half feet wide and six feet long into a drift, a little winding, and he had got a lamp at the inner extremity. I observed as I approached in a course at right angles with the length of the cave, that its mouth was lit as if the light were close to it, so that I did not suspect its depth. Indeed, the light of this lamp was remarkably reflected and distributed. The snowy walls were one universal reflector with countless facets. I think that one

lamp would light sufficiently a hall built of this material. The snow about the mouth of the cave within had the yellow color of the flame to me approaching, as if the lamp were close to it. We afterward buried the lamp in a little crypt in this snow-drift, and walled it in, and found that its light was visible even in this twilight through fifteen inches thickness of snow. The snow was all aglow with it. If it had been darker, probably it would have been visible through a much greater thickness. — But what was most surprising to me, when E. crawled into the extremity of his cave, and shouted at the top of his voice, it sounded ridiculously faint, as if he were a quarter of a mile off. At first I could not believe that he spoke loud, but we all of us crawled in by turns, and though our heads were only six feet from those outside, our loudest shouting only amused and surprised them. Apparently the porous snow drank up all the sound. The voice was in fact muffled by the surrounding snow walls, and I saw that we might lie in that hole screaming for assistance in vain while travelers were passing along twenty feet distant. It had the effect of ventriloquism. So you need only make a snow house in your yard and pass an hour in it, to realize a good deal of Esquimaux life.

Jan. 20, 1859. . . . Among four or five pick-

erel in a "well" on the river, I see one with distinct transverse bars, as I look down on its back, not quite across the back, but plain as they spring from the side of the back, while all the others are uniformly dark above. Is not the former *Esox fasciatus*? . . .

The green of the ice and water begins to be visible about half an hour before sunset. Is it produced by the reflected blue of the sky mingling with the yellow or pink of the setting sun?

Jan. 21, 1838. Man is the artificer of his own happiness. Let him beware how he complains of the disposition of circumstances, for it is his own disposition he blames. If this is sour, or that rough, or the other steep, let him think if it be not his work. If his look curdles all hearts, let him not complain of a sour reception; if he hobble in his gait, let him not grumble at the roughness of the way; if he is weak in the knees, let him not call the hill steep. This was the pith of the inscription on the wall of the Swedish inn, "You will find at Trolhate excellent bread, meat, and wine, provided you bring them with you!"

Every leaf and twig was this morning covered with a sparkling ice armor. Even the grasses in exposed fields were hung with innumerable diamond pendants which jingled merrily when brushed by the foot of the traveler.

. . . It was as if some superincumbent stratum of the earth had been removed in the night, exposing to light a bed of untarnished crystals. The scene changed at every step, or as the head was inclined to the right or to the left. There were the opal, and sapphire, and emerald, and jasper, and beryl, and topaz, and ruby.

Such is beauty ever, neither here nor there, now nor then, neither in Rome nor in Athens, but wherever there is a soul to admire. If I seek her elsewhere because I do not find her at home, my search will be a fruitless one.

Jan. 21, 1841. We can render men the best assistance by letting them see how rare a thing it is to need any assistance. I am not in haste to help men more than God is. If they will not help themselves, shall I become their abettor?

If I have unintentionally injured the feelings of any, or profaned their sacred character, we shall be necessitated to know each other better than before. I have gained a glorious vantage-ground then, and to the other the shaft which carried the wound will bear its own remedy with it, for we cannot be profaned without the consciousness that we have a holy fane for our asylum somewhere. Would that sincere words might always drive men thus to earth themselves!

Jan. 21, 1852. . . . To record truths which

have the same relation and value to the next world, *i. e.*, the world of thought and of the soul, that political news have to this. . . .

Heard —— lecture to-night. . . . Why did I not like it better? Can I deny that it was good? Perhaps I am bound to account to *myself* at least for any lurking dislike for what others admire, and I am not *prepared* to find fault with. Well, I did not like it then because it did not make me like it, it did not carry me away captive. The lecturer was not simple enough. For the most part, the manner overbore, choked off, stifled, put out of sight the matter. I was inclined to forget that he was speaking, conveying ideas, thought there had been an intermission. Never endeavor to supply the tone which you think proper for certain sentences. It is as if a man whose mind was at ease should supply the tones and gestures for a man in distress who found only the words. One makes a speech and another behind him makes the gestures. — Then he reminded me of Emerson, and I could not afford to be reminded of Christ himself. Yet who can deny that it was good? But it was that intelligence, that way of viewing things (combined with much peculiar *talent*), which is the common property of this generation. A man does best when he is most himself.

I never realized so distinctly as at this moment that I am peacefully parting company with the best friend I ever had, from the fact that each is pursuing his proper path. I perceive that it is possible we may have a better understanding now than when we were more at one, not expecting such essential agreement as before. Simply our paths diverge.

Jan. 21, 1853. A fine, still, warm moonlight evening. . . . Moon not yet full. To the woods by the Deep Cut at nine o'clock. The blueness of the sky at night is an everlasting surprise to me, suggesting the constant presence and prevalence of light in the firmament, the color it wears by day, that we see through the veil of night to the constant blue. The night is not black when the air is clear, but blue still, as by day. The great ocean of light and ether is unaffected by our partial night. . . . At midnight I see into the universal day.

I am somewhat oppressed and saddened by the sameness and apparent poverty of the heavens, that these irregular and few geometrical figures which the constellations make are no other than those seen by the Chaldæan shepherds. I pine for a new world in the heavens as well as on the earth, and though it is some consolation to hear of the wilderness of stars and systems invisible to the naked eye, yet the

sky does not make that impression of variety and wildness that even the forest does, as it ought to do. It makes an impression rather of simplicity and unchangeableness, as of eternal laws. . . . I seem to see it pierced with visual rays from a thousand observatories. It is more the domain of science than of poetry. It is the stars as not known to science that I would know, the stars which the lonely traveler knows. The Chaldæan shepherds saw not the same stars which I see, and if I am elevated in the least toward the heavens, I do not accept their classification of them. I am not to be distracted by the names which they have imposed. The sun which I know is not Apollo, nor is the evening star Venus. The heaven should be as new, at least, as the world is new. The classification of the stars is old and musty. It is as if a mildew had taken place in the heavens, as if the stars, so closely packed, had heated and moulded there. If they appear fixed, it is because men have been thus necessitated to see them. . . . A few good anecdotes is our science, with a few imposing statements respecting distance and size, and little or nothing about the stars as they concern man. It teaches how he may survey a country or sail a ship, and not how he may steer his life. Astrology contained the germ of a higher truth than this. It may

happen that the stars are more significant and truly celestial to the teamster than to the astronomer. . . . Children study astronomy at the district school, and learn that the sun is ninety-five millions of miles distant and the like, a statement which never made any impression on me, because I never walked it, and which I cannot be said to believe. But the sun shines nevertheless. Though observatories are multiplied, the heavens receive very little attention. The naked eye may easily see farther than the armed. It depends on who looks through it. Man's eye is the true star-finder, the comet-seeker. No superior telescope to this has been invented. In those big ones, the recoil is equal to the force of the discharge. "The poet's eye in a fine frenzy rolling" ranges from earth to heaven, which the astronomer's eye not often does. It does not see far beyond the dome of the observatory. . . .

As I walk the railroad causeway, I am disturbed by the sound of my steps on the frozen ground. I wish to hear the silence of the night. I cannot walk with my ears covered, for the silence is something positive and to be heard. I must stand still and listen with open ear, far from the noises of the village, that the night may make its impression on me, a fertile and eloquent silence. Sometimes the silence is

merely negative, an arid and barren waste in which I shudder, where no ambrosia grows. I must hear the whispering of a myriad voices. Silence alone is worthy to be heard. It is of various depths and fertility like soil. Now it is a mere Sahara where men perish of hunger and thirst, now a fertile bottom and prairie of the West. As I leave the village, drawing nearer to the woods, I listen from time to time to hear the hounds of silence baying the moon, to know if they are on the track of any game. If there is no Diana in the night, what is it worth? . . . The silence sings. It is musical. I remember a night when it was audible. I heard the unspeakable. . . .

If night is the mere negation of day, I hear nothing but my own steps in it. Death is with me, and life far away. If the elements are not human, if the winds do not sing or sigh, as the stars twinkle, my life runs shallow. I measure the depth of my own being. . . .

When I enter the woods, I am fed by the variety, the forms of the trees above against the blue, with the stars seen through the pines, like the lamps hung on them in an illumination, the somewhat indistinct and misty fineness of the pine tops, the finely divided spray of the oaks, etc., and the shadow of all these on the snow. The first shadow I came to, I thought was a black

place where the woodchoppers had had a fire. These myriad shadows checker the white ground and enhance the brightness of the enlightened portions. See the shadows of these young oaks which have lost half their leaves, more beautiful than the trees themselves, like the shadow of a chandelier, and motionless as fallen leaves on the snow; but shake the tree, and all is in motion.

In this stillness and at this distance I hear the nine o'clock bell in Bedford, five miles off, which I might never hear in the village; but here its music surmounts the village din and has something very sweet and noble and inspiring in it, associated in fact with the hooting of owls.

Returning, I thought I heard the creaking of a wagon, just starting from Hubbard's door, and rarely musical it sounded. It was the Telegraph harp. It began to sound at one spot only. It is very fitful, and only sounds when it is in the mood. You may go by twenty times both when the wind is high and when it is low, and let it blow which way it will, and yet hear no strain from it. But at another time, at a particular spot, you may hear a strain rising and swelling on the string, which may at last ripen to something glorious. The wire will perhaps labor long with it before it attains to melody.

Even the creaking of a wagon in a frosty night has music in it which allies it to the highest and purest strains of the muse. . . .

Minott says his mother told him she had seen a deer come down the hill behind her house, where J. Moore's now is, and cross the road and the meadow in front. Thinks it may have been eighty years ago.

Jan. 21, 1857. . . . It is remarkable how many tracks of foxes you will see quite near the village, where they have been in the night, and yet a regular walker will not glimpse one oftener than once in eight or ten years. . . .

As I flounder along the Corner road against the root fence, a very large flock of snow buntings alight with a wheeling flight amid the weeds rising above the snow . . . a hundred or two of them. They run restlessly amid the weeds, so that I can hardly get sight of them through my glass. Then suddenly all arise and fly only two or three rods, alighting within three rods of me. They keep up a constant twittering. It is as if they were ready any instant for a longer flight, but their leader had not so ordered it. Suddenly away they sweep again, and I see them alight in a distant field where the weeds rise above the snow, but in a few minutes they have left that also, and gone farther north. Beside their rippling note, they have a vibratory twitter,

and from the loiterers you have a quite tender peep, as they fly after the vanishing flock. What independent creatures! They go seeking their food from north to south. If New Hampshire and Maine are covered deeply with snow, they scale down to Massachusetts for their breakfast. Not liking the grains in this field, away they dash to another distant one, attracted by the weeds rising above the snow. Who can guess in what field, by what river or mountain, they breakfasted this morning? They did not seem to regard me so near, but as they went off, their wave actually broke over me as a rock. They have the pleasure of society at their feasts, a hundred dining at once, busily talking while eating, remembering what occurred in Grinnell Land. As they flew past me, they presented a pretty appearance, somewhat like broad bars of white alternating with bars of black.

Jan. 22, 1852. Having occasion to get up and light a lamp in the middle of a sultry night, perhaps to exterminate mosquitoes, I observed a stream of large black ants passing up and down one of the bare corner posts, those descending having their large white eggs or larvæ in their mouths, the others making haste up for another load. I supposed that they had found the heat so great just under the roof as to compel them to remove their progeny to a cooler place.

They had evidently taken and communicated the resolution to improve the coolness of the night to remove their young to a cooler and safer locality, one stream running up, and another down, with great industry.

But why did I change? Why did I leave the woods? I do not think that I can tell. I have often wished myself back. I do not know any better how I came to go there. Perhaps it is none of my business, even if it is yours. Perhaps I wanted change. There was a little stagnation, it may be, about two o'clock in the afternoon. The world's axle creaked, as if it wanted greasing, as if the oxen labored with the wain, and could hardly get their load over the ridge of the day. Perhaps if I lived there much longer, I might live there forever. One would think twice before he accepted heaven on such terms. A ticket to heaven must include a ticket to Limbo, Purgatory, and Hell. Your ticket to the Boxes admits you to the Pit also.

How much botany is indebted to the Arabians. A great part of our common names of plants appear to be Arabic. . . .

The pleasures of the intellect are permanent, the pleasures of the heart are transitory. — My friend invites me to read my papers to him. Gladly would I read, if he would hear. He must not hear coarsely, but finely, suffering not

the least to pass through the sieve of hearing. — To associate with one for years with joy who never met you thought with thought! An overflowing sympathy, while yet there is no intellectual communion. Could we not meet on higher ground with the same heartiness? It is dull work reading to one who does not apprehend you. How can it go on? I will still abide by the truth in my converse and intercourse with my friends, whether I am so brought nearer to or removed farther from them. I shall not be less your friend for answering you truly, though coldly. Even the estrangement of friends is a fact to be serenely contemplated, as in the course of Nature. It is of no use to lie either by word or action. Is not the everlasting truth agreeable to you?

To set down such choice experiences that my own writings may inspire me, and at last I may make wholes of parts. Certainly it is a distinct profession to rescue from oblivion and to fix the sentiments and thoughts which visit all men more or less generally. That the contemplation of the unfinished picture may suggest its harmonious completion. Associate reverently and as much as you can with your loftiest thoughts. Each thought that is welcomed and recorded is a nest-egg by the side of which more will be laid. . . . Perhaps this is the main value of a

habit of writing, of keeping a journal, that so we remember our best hours, and stimulate ourselves. My thoughts are my company. They have a certain individuality and separate existence, aye, personality. Having by chance recorded a few disconnected thoughts, and then brought them into juxtaposition, they suggest a whole new field in which it was possible to labor and think. Thought begat thought. . . .

When a man asks me a question, I look him in the face. If I do not see any inquiry there, I cannot answer it. A man asked me about the coldness of this winter compared with others, last night. I looked at him. His face expressed no more curiosity or relationship to me than a custard pudding. I made him a random answer. I put him off till he was in earnest. He wanted to make conversation. . . .

That in the preaching or mission of the Jesuits in Canada which converted the Indians was their sincerity. They could not be suspected of sinister motives. The savages were not poor observers or reasoners. The priests were therefore sure of success, for they had paid the price of it.

We resist no true invitations. They are irresistible. When my friend asks me to stay, and I do not, unless I have another engagement, it is because I do not find myself invited. It is

not in his will to invite me. We should deal with the real mood of our friends. I visited my friend constantly for many years, and he postponed our friendship to trivial engagements, so that I saw him not at all. When in after years he had leisure to meet me, I did not find myself invited to go to him.

Jan. 22, 1854. . . . Once or twice of late I have seen the mother-of-pearl tints and rainbow flecks in the western sky. The usual time is when the air is clear and pretty cool, about an hour before sunset. Yesterday I saw a very permanent specimen, like a long knife handle of mother-of-pearl, very pale, with an interior blue, and rosaceous tinges. I think the summer sky never exhibits this so finely.

No second snow-storm in the winter can be so fair and interesting as the first.

Jan. 22, 1855. Heavy rain in the night and half of to-day, with very high wind from the southward washing off the snow, and filling the road with water. . . . It is very exciting to see where was so lately only ice and snow, dark, wavy lakes dashing in furious torrents through the commonly dry channels under the causeways, to hear only the rush and roar of waters, and look down on mad billows where in summer are commonly only dry pebbles. . . . The musk-rats driven out of their holes by the water are

exceedingly numerous. Yet many of their cabins are above water on the S. branch. Here there are none. We saw fifteen or twenty of these creatures at least between Derby's bridge and the Tarbel spring, either swimming with surprising swiftness up or down or across the stream, to avoid us, or sitting at the water's edge, or resting on the edge of the ice, or on some alder bough just on the surface. One refreshed himself after his cold swim regardless of us, probed his fur with his nose, and scratched his ear like a dog. They frequently swam toward an apple-tree in the midst of the water, in the vain hope of finding a resting place and refuge there. I saw one looking quite a reddish brown, busily feeding on some plant just at the water's edge, thrusting his head under for it. But I hear the sound of Goodwin's gun up stream, and see his bag stuffed out with their dead bodies.

Jan. 22, 1857. . . . I asked Minott about the cold Friday. He said "it was plaguey cold. It stung like a wasp." He remembers seeing them toss up water in a shoemaker's shop, usually a very warm place, and when it struck the floor it was frozen, and rattled like so many shot.

Jan. 22, 1859. . . . The muskrat hunter last night with his increased supply of powder and shot, and boat turned up somewhere on the

bank, now that the river is rapidly rising, dreaming of his exploits to-day in shooting muskrats, of the great pile of dead rats that will weigh down his boat before night when he will return wet and weary and weather-beaten to his hut with an appetite for his supper, and for much sluggish . . . social intercourse with his fellows, even he, dark, dull, much battered flint as he is, is an inspired man to his extent now, perhaps the most inspired by this freshet of any, and the Musketaquid meadows cannot spare him. There are poets of all kinds and degrees, little known to each other. The Lake School is not the only or the principal one. They love various things; some love beauty and some love rum. Some go to Rome, and some go a-fishing, and are sent to the house of correction once a month. They keep up their fires by means unknown to me. I know not their comings and goings. How can I tell what violets they watch for? I know them wild, and ready to risk all when their muse invites. The most sluggish will be up early enough then, and face any amount of wet and cold. I meet these gods of the river and woods with sparkling faces (like Apollo's), late from the house of correction, it may be, carrying whatever mystic and forbidden bottles or other vessels concealed, while the dull, regular priests are steering their

parish rafts in a prose mood. What care I to see galleries full of representations of heathen gods, when I can see actual living ones, by an infinitely superior artist. . . . If you read the Rig Veda, oldest of books, as it were, describing a very primitive people and condition of things, you hear in their prayers of a still older, more primitive and aboriginal race in their midst and roundabout, warring on them, and seizing their flocks and herds, infesting their pastures. Thus is it in another sense in all communities, and hence the prisons and police. I hear these guns going to-day, and I must confess they are to me a springlike and exhilarating sound, like the cock-crowing, though each one may report the death of a muskrat. This, methinks, or the like of this, with whatever mixture of dross, is the real morning or evening hymn that goes up from these vales to-day, and which the stars echo. This is the best sort of glorifying God and enjoying Him that at all prevails here to-day. . . . As a mother loves to see her children take nourishment and expand, so God loves to see his children thrive on the nutriment He has furnished them. . . . These aboriginal men cannot be repressed, but under some guise or other they survive and reappear continually. Just as simply as the crow picks up the worms which are over the fields, having been washed out by the

thaw, these men pick up the muskrats that have been washed out of the banks. And to some such ends men plow and sail, and powder and shot are made, and the grocer exists to retail them, though he may think himself much more the deacon of some church.

Jan. 22, 1860. Up river to Fair Haven Pond. . . . Where the sedge grows rankly and is uncut, as along the edge of the river and meadows, what fine coverts are made for mice, etc., at this season. It is arched over, and the snow rests chiefly on its ends, while the middle part is elevated from six inches to a foot, and forms a thick thatch, as it were, even when all is covered with snow, under which the mice, etc., can run freely, out of the way of the wind and of foxes. After a pretty deep snow has just partially melted, you are surprised to find, as you walk through such a meadow, how high and lightly the sedge lies up, as if there had been no pressure upon it. It grows, perhaps, in dense tufts or tussocks, and when it falls over, it forms a thickly thatched roof.

Nature provides shelter for her creatures in various ways. If the muskrat has no longer extensive fields of weeds and grass to crawl in, what an extensive range it has under the ice of the meadows and river sides; for the water settling directly after freezing, an icy roof of

indefinite extent is thus provided for it, and it passes almost its whole winter under shelter, out of the wind, and invisible to men.

Jan. 23, 1841. A day is lapsing. I hear cockerels crowing in the yard, and see them stalking among the chips in the sun. I hear busy feet on the floors, and the whole house jars with industry. Surely the day is well spent, and the time is full to overflowing. Mankind is as busy as the flowers in summer, which make haste to unfold themselves in the forenoon, and close their petals in the afternoon. The momentous topics of human life are always of secondary importance to the business in hand, just as carpenters discuss politics between the strokes of the hammer, while they are shingling a roof. The squeaking of the pump sounds as necessary as the music of the spheres. The solidity and apparent necessity of this routine insensibly recommend it to me. It is like a cane or a cushion for the infirm, and in view of it all are infirm. If there were but one erect and solid-standing tree in the woods, all creatures would go to rub themselves against it, and make sure of their footing. Routine is a ground to stand on, a wall to retreat to. We cannot draw on our boots without bracing ourselves against it. Our health requires that we should recline on it from time to time. When we are in it, the

hand stands still on the face of the clock, and we grow like corn in the genial darkness and silence of the night. Our weakness wants it, but our strength uses it. Good for the body is the work of the body, and good for the soul, the work of the soul, and good for either, the work of the other. Let them not call hard names, nor know a divided interest.

When I detect a beauty in any of the recesses of nature, I am reminded by the serene and retired spirit in which it requires to be contemplated of the inexpressible privacy of a life. How silent and unambitious it is! The beauty there is in mosses will have to be considered from the holiest, quietest nook. — The gods delight in stillness. . . . My truest, serenest moments are too still for emotion. They have woolen feet. In all our lives, we live under the hill, and if we are not gone, we live there still.

Jan. 23, 1852. . . . Deep Cut going to Fair Haven Hill. No music from the telegraph harp on the causeway where the wind is strong, but in the Cut this cold day I hear memorable strains. What must the birds and beasts think where it passes through woods, who heard only the squeaking of the trees before? I should think that these strains would get into their music at last. Will not the mocking-bird be heard one day inserting this strain in his medley? It in-

toxicates me. Orpheus is still alive. All poetry and mythology revive. The spirits of all bards sweep the strings. I hear the clearest silver lyre-like tones, Tyrtæan tones. . . . It is the most glorious music I ever heard. All those bards revive and flourish again in those five minutes in the Deep Cut. The breeze came through an oak still waving its dry leaves. The very fine, clear tones seemed to come from the very core and pith of the telegraph pole. I know not but it is my own chords that tremble so divinely. There are barytones and high, sharp tones, and some come sweeping seemingly from farther along the wire. The latent music of the earth had found here a vent, music Æolian. There were two strings in fact, one each side. . . . Thus, as ever, the finest uses of things are the accidental. Mr. Morse did not invent this music. . . .

There are some whose ears help me so that my things have a rare significance when I read to them. It is almost too good a hearing, so that, for the time, I regard my own writing from too favorable a point of view.

Jan. 23, 1854. Love tends to purify and sublime itself. It mortifies and triumphs over the flesh, and the bond of its union is holiness.

The increased length of the days is very observable of late. What is a winter unless

you have risen and gone abroad frequently before sunrise and by starlight. — Varro speaks of what he calls, I believe, before-light (*antelucana*) occupations in winter, on the farm. Such is especially milking in this neighborhood. Speaking of the rustic villa, he says, You must see that the kitchen is convenient, "because some things are to be done there in the winter before daylight (*antelucanis temporibus*), food is to be prepared and taken." In the study, are not some things to be done before daylight, and a certain food to be prepared there?

Jan. 23, 1857. The coldest day that I remember recording, clear and bright, but very high wind, blowing the snow. Ink froze; had to break the ice in my pail with a hammer. Thermometer at $6\frac{3}{4}$ A. M., —18°, at $10\frac{1}{2}$, —14°, at $12\frac{3}{4}$, —9°, at 4 P. M., —$5\frac{1}{2}$°; at $7\frac{1}{2}$ P. M., —8°. I may safely say that —5° has been the highest temperature to-day by our thermometer. Walking this P. M., I notice that the face inclines to stiffen. . . . On first coming out in very cold weather, I find that I breathe fast, though without walking faster or exerting myself more than usual.

Jan. 24, 1857. About $6\frac{1}{2}$ A. M. [mercury (?)] in the bulb of thermometer, Smith's on the same nail, —30°. At $9\frac{1}{4}$ A. M., ours —18°, Smith's —22°, which indicates that ours would have

stood at 26° at 6½ A. M., if the thermometer had been long enough. At 11½ A. M., ours was —1°, at 4 P. M., +12°.

Jan. 25, 1857. Still another very cold morning. Smith's thermometer over ours, at —29°, [mercury ?] in bulb of ours. But about 7, ours was —18°, and Smith's at —24°. Ours, therefore, at first, about —23°.

Jan. 26, 1857. Another cold morning. None looked early, but about 8, it was —14°. Saw Boston Harbor frozen over, as it had been for some time. It reminded me of, I think, Parry's Winter Harbor, with vessels frozen in. Saw thousands on the ice, a stream of men where they were cutting a channel toward the city. Ice said to reach fourteen miles. Snow untracked on many decks.

Ice did not finally go out till about February 15th.

Jan. 23, 1858, The wonderfully mild and pleasant weather continues. The ground has been bare since the 11th. This morning was colder than before. I have not been able to walk up the North Branch this winter, nor along the channel of the South Branch at any time.

P. M. To Saw Mill Brook. A fine afternoon. There has been but little use for gloves this winter, though I have been surveying a great deal for three months. The sun and cock-crowing, bare ground, etc., remind me of spring.

Standing on the bridge over the Mill Brook, on the Turnpike, there being but little ice on the S. side, I see several small water-bugs (*gyrans*) swimming about, as in the spring. . . .

At Ditch Pond, I hear what I suppose to be a fox barking, an exceedingly husky, hoarse, and ragged note, prolonged perhaps by the echo, like a feeble puppy, or even a child endeavoring to scream, but checked by fear. Yet it is on a high key. It sounds so through the wood, while I am in the hollow, that I cannot tell from which side it comes. I hear it bark forty or fifty times, at least. It is a peculiar sound, quite unlike any other woodland sound that I know. . . .

Who can doubt that men are by a certain fate what they are, contending with unseen and unimagined difficulties, or encouraged and aided by equally mysterious, auspicious circumstances? Who can doubt this essential and innate difference between man and man, when he considers a whole race, like the Indian, inevitably and resignedly passing away in spite of our efforts to Christianize and educate them? Individuals accept their fate and live according to it, as the Indian does. Everybody notices that the Indian retains his habits wonderfully, is still the same man that the discoverers found. The fact is, the history of the white man is a history

of improvement, that of the red man, a history of fixed habits or stagnation.

To insure health, a man's relation to nature must come very near to a personal one. He must be conscious of a friendliness in her. When human friends fail or die, she must stand in the gap to him. I cannot conceive of any life which deserves the name, unless there is in it a certain tender relation to nature. This it is which makes winter warm, and supplies society in the desert and wilderness. Unless nature sympathizes with and speaks to us, as it were, the most fertile and blooming regions are barren and dreary. . . . I do not see that I can live tolerably without affection for nature. If I feel no softening toward the rocks, what do they signify. . . .

The dog is to the fox as the white man to the red. The former has attained to more clearness in his bark; it is more ringing and musical, more developed; he explodes the vowels of his alphabet better, and besides he has made his place so good in the world that he can run without skulking in the open field. What a smothered, ragged, feeble, and unmusical sound is the bark of the fox! It seems as if he scarcely dared raise his voice lest it should catch the ear of his tame cousin and inveterate foe. . . .

I do not think much of that chemistry that

can extract corn and potatoes out of a barren soil, compared with that which can extract thought and sentiment out of the life of a man on any soil.

It is in vain to write of the seasons unless you have the seasons in you.

Jan. 23, 1859. . . . There is a cold N. W. wind, and I notice that the snow fleas, which were so abundant over this water yesterday, have hopped to some lee, *i. e.*, are collected like powder under the S. E. side of posts or trees, sticks or ridges in the ice. You are surprised to see that they manage to get out of the wind. On the S. E. side of every such barrier along the shore there is a dark line or heap of them.

Jan. 24, 1841. I almost shrink from the arduousness of meeting men erectly day by day.

Be resolutely and faithfully what you are, be humbly what you aspire to be. Be sure you give men the best of your wares, though they be poor enough, and the gods will help you to lay up a better store for the future. Man's noblest gift to man is his sincerity, for it embraces his integrity also. Let him not dole out of himself anxiously to suit their weaker or stronger stomachs, but make a clear gift of himself, and empty his coffers at once. I would be in society as in the landscape; in the presence of nature there is no reserve nor effrontery.

Coleridge says of the "ideas spoken out everywhere in the Old and New Testaments," that they "resemble the fixed stars which appear of the same size to the naked or the armed eye, the magnitude of which the telescope may rather seem to diminish than to increase."

It is more proper for a spiritual fact to have suggested an analogous natural one than for the natural fact to have preceded the spiritual in our minds.

By spells seriousness will be forced to cut capers, and drink a deep and refreshing draught of silliness, to turn this sedate day of Lucifer's and Apollo's into an all fools' day for Harlequin and Cornwallis. The sun does not grudge his rays to either, but they are alike patronized by the gods. Like overtasked school-boys, all my members and nerves and sinews petition thought for a recess, and my very thigh bones itch to slip away from under me, and run and join in the melée. I exult in stark inanity. — We think the gods reveal themselves only to sedate and musing gentlemen, but not so; the buffoon in the midst of his antics catches unobserved glimpses which he treasures for the lonely hour. When I have been playing tom fool, I have been driven to exchange the old for a more liberal and catholic philosophy.

Jan. 24, 1852. If thou art a writer, write as

if thy time were short, for it is indeed short, at the longest. Improve each occasion when the soul is reached. Drain the cup of inspiration to its last dregs. Fear no intemperance in that, for the years will come when otherwise thou wilt regret opportunities unimproved. The spring will not last forever. These fertile and expanding seasons of thy life, when the rain reaches thy root, when thy vigor shoots, when thy flower is budding, shall be fewer and farther between. Again I say, remember thy creator in the days of thy youth. Use and commit to life what you cannot commit to memory. I hear the tones of my sister's piano below. It reminds me of strains which once I heard more frequently, when possessed with the inaudible rhythm I sought my chamber in the cold, and communed with my own thoughts. I feel as if I then received the gifts of the gods with too much indifference. Why did I not cultivate those fields they introduced me to? Does nothing withstand the inevitable march of time? Why did I not use my eyes when I stood on Pisgah? Now I hear those strains but seldom. My rhythmical mood does not endure. I cannot draw from it and return to it in my thought as to a well, all the evening or the morning. I cannot dip my pen in it. I cannot work the vein, it is so fine and volatile. Ah, sweet, ineffable reminiscences.

In thy journal let there never be a jest. To the earnest, there is nothing ludicrous. . . .

When the telegraph harp trembles and wavers, I am most affected, as if it were approaching to articulation. It sports so with my heart strings. When the harp dies away a little, then I revive for it. It cannot be too faint. I almost envy the Irish whose shanty in the Cut is so near that they can hear this music daily, standing at their door. How strange to think that a sound so soothing, elevating, educating . . . might have been heard sweeping other strings when only the red man ranged these fields, might, perchance, in course of time have civilized him!

Jan. 24, 1856. A journal is a record of experiences and growth, not a preserve of things well done or said. I am occasionally reminded of a statement which I have made in conversation and immediately forgotten, which would read much better than what I put in my journal. It is a ripe, dry fruit of long past experience which falls from me easily without giving pain or pleasure. The charm of the journal must consist in a certain greenness, though freshness, and not in maturity. Here I cannot afford to be remembering what I said or did, my scurf cast off, but what I am and aspire to become.

Reading the hymns of the Rig Veda, translated by Wilson, which consist, in a great

measure, of simple epithets addressed to the firmament, or the dawn, or the winds, which mean more or less as the reader is more or less alert and imaginative, and seeing how widely the various translators have differed, they regarding not the poetry, but the history and philology, dealing with very concise Sanskrit which must almost always be amplified to be understood, I am sometimes inclined to doubt if the translator has not made something out of nothing, whether a real idea or sentiment has been thus transmitted to us from so primitive a period. I doubt if learned Germans might not thus edit pebbles from the sea-shore into hymns of the Rig Veda, and translators translate them accordingly, extracting the meaning which the sea has imparted to them in very primitive times. While the commentators and translators are disputing about the meaning of this word or that, I hear only the resounding of the ancient sea, and put into it the deepest meaning I am possessed of, for I do not the least care where I get my ideas, or what suggests them. . . .

I have seen many a collection of stately elms which better deserved to be represented at the General Court than the manikins beneath, than the bar-room, the victualing cellar, and groceries they overshadowed. When I see their magnificent domes miles away in the horizon,

over intervening valleys and forests, they suggest a village, a community there. But, after all, it is a secondary consideration whether there are human dwellings beneath them. These may have long since passed away. I find that into my idea of the village has entered more of the elm than of the human being. They are worth many a political borough. They constitute a borough. The poor human representative of his party sent out from beneath their shade will not suggest a tithe of the dignity, the true nobleness and comprehensiveness of view, the sturdiness and independence, and serene beneficence that they do. They look from township to township. . . . They battle with the tempests of a century. See what scars they bear, what limbs they lost before we were born. Yet they never adjourn, they steadily vote for their principles, and send their roots farther and wider from the same centre. They die at their posts, and they leave a tough butt for the choppers to exercise themselves about, and a stump which serves for their monument. They attend no caucus, they make no compromise, they use no policy. Their one principle is growth. They combine a true radicalism with a true conservatism. Their radicalism is not a cutting away of roots, but a multiplication and extension of them under all surrounding institutions. They take

a firmer hold on the earth that they may rise higher into the heavens. . . . Their conservatism is a dead but solid heart-wood which is the pivot and firm column of support to all their growth, appropriating nothing to itself, but forever, by its support, assisting to extend the area of their radicalism. Half a century after they are dead at the core, they are preserved by radical reforms. They do not, like men, from radicals turn conservatives. Their conservative part dies out first, their radical and growing part survives. They acquire new states and territories while the old dominions decay and become the habitation of bears and owls and coons.

Jan. 24, 1858. P. M. Nut Meadow Brook. The river is broadly open as usual this winter. You can hardly say that we have had any sleighing at all . . . though five or six inches of snow lay on the ground five days after January 6th. But I do not quite like this warm weather and bare ground at this season. What is a winter without snow and ice in this latitude? The bare earth is unsightly. This winter is but unburied summer. . . .

At Nut Meadow Brook the small sized waterbugs are as abundant and active as in summer. I see forty or fifty circling together in the smooth and sunny bays all along the

brook. This is something new to me. What must they think of this winter? It is like a child waked up and set to playing at midnight. They seem more ready than usual to dive to the bottom when disturbed. At night, of course, they dive to the bottom and bury themselves, and if in the morning they perceive no curtain of ice drawn over their sky and the pleasant weather continues, they gladly rise again and resume their gyrations in some sunny bay amid the alders and the stubble. I think I never noticed them more numerous, but I never looked for them so particularly. . . . The sun falling thus warmly, for so long, on the open surface of the brook tempts them upward gradually. . . . What a funny way they have of going to bed. They do not take a light and retire up-stairs, they go below. Suddenly it is heels up and heads down, and they go down to their muddy bed, and let the unresting stream flow over them in their dreams. They go to bed in another element. What a deep slumber must be theirs, and what dreams down in the mud there! So the insect life is not withdrawn far off, but a warm sun would soon entice it forth. Sometimes they seem to have a little difficulty in making the plunge. May be they are too dry to slip under. I saw one floating on its back, and it struggled a little while before it righted

itself. Suppose you were to plot the course of one for a day. What kind of a figure would it make? Probably this feat, too, will one day be performed by science, that maid of all work. I see one chasing a mote, and the wave the creature makes always causes the mote to float away from it. I would like to know what it is they communicate to one another, they who appear to value each other's society so much. How many water-bugs make a quorum? How many hundreds does their Fourier think it takes to make a complete bug? Where did they get their backs polished so? They will have occasion to remember this year, that winter when we were waked out of our annual sleep. What is their precise hour for retiring?

I see stretching from side to side of this smooth brook where it is three or four feet wide what seems to indicate an invisible waving line, like a cobweb, against which the water is heaped up a very little. This line is constantly swayed to and fro, as by the current or wind, bellying forward here and there. I try repeatedly to catch and break it with my hand and let the water run free, but still to my surprise I clutch nothing but fluid, and the imaginary line keeps its place. Is it the fluctuating edge of a lighter, perhaps more oily, fluid, overflowing a heavier? I see several such lines. It is somewhat like the

slightest conceivable smooth fall over a dam. I must ask the water-bug that glides across it. Ah, if I had no more sins to answer for than a water-bug! They are only the small water-bugs that I see. They are earlier in the spring and apparently hardier than the others. . . .

Between winter and summer there is to my mind an immeasurable interval. When I pry into the old bank swallow holes to-day, see the marks of their bills, and even whole eggs left at the bottom, these things affect me as the phenomena of a former geological period. Yet perchance the very swallow which laid those eggs will revisit this hole next spring. The upper side of her gallery is a low arch quite firm and durable.

Jan. 24, 1859. . . . I see an abundance of caterpillars of various kinds on the ice of the meadows, many of them large, dark, hairy, with longitudinal light stripes, *somewhat* like the common apple one. Many of them are frozen in still, some for two thirds their length, though all are alive. Yet it has been so cold since the rise that you can now cross the channel almost anywhere. — I also see a great many of those little brown grasshoppers, and one perfectly green, some of them frozen in, but generally on the surface, showing no sign of life, yet when I brought them home to experiment on, I found

them all alive and kicking in my pocket. There was also a small kind of reddish wasp quite lively on the ice, and other insects. There were naked or smooth worms or caterpillars. This shows what insects have their winter quarters in the meadow grass. This ice is a good field for the entomologist. . . . The larger spiders generally rest on the ice with all their bags spread, but on being touched they gather them up.

Monday, Jan. 25, 1841. On the morning when the wild geese go over I, too, feel the migratory instinct strong within me, and anticipate the breaking up of winter. If I yielded to this impulse, it would surely guide me to summer haunts. This indefinite restlessness and fluttering on the perch no doubt prophesy the final migration of souls out of nature to a serener summer, in long harrows and waving lines, in the spring weather, over what fair uplands and fertile elysian meadows, winging their way at evening, and seeking a resting place with loud cackling and uproar. . . .

We should strengthen and beautify and industriously mould our bodies to be fit companions of the soul, assist them to grow up like trees, and be agreeable and wholesome objects in nature. I think if I had had the disposal of this soul of man, I should have bestowed it sooner on some antelope of the plains than upon this sickly and sluggish body.

Jan. 25, 1852. . . . The cold for some weeks has been intense, . . . a Canadian winter. . . . But last night and to-day the weather has moderated. It is glorious to be abroad this afternoon, the snow melts on the surface; the warmth of the sun reminds me of summer. The dog runs before us on the railroad causeway, and appears to enjoy it as much as ourselves. . . . The clay in the deep Cut is melting and streaming down, glistening in the sun. It is I that melts, while the harp sounds on high. The snow-drifts on the west side look like clouds. — We turned down the brook at Heywood's meadow. It was worth while to see how the water even in the marsh, where the brook is almost stagnant, sparkled in this atmosphere, for, though warm, it is remarkably clear. Water, which in summer would look dark, and perhaps turbid, now sparkles like the lakes in November. The water is the more attractive, since all around is deep snow. The brook here is full of cat-tails, *Typha latifolia*, reed-mace. I found on pulling open, or breaking in my hand as one would break bread, the still perfect spikes of this fine reed, that the flowers were red or crimson at their base where united to the stem. When I rubbed off what was at first but a thimble full of these dry flowerets, they suddenly took in air and flashed up like powder, expanding like feathers

or foam, filling and overflowing my hand to which they imparted a sensation of warmth quite remarkable. . . . I could not tire of repeating the experiment. I think a single one would more than fill a half peck measure, if they lay as light as at first in the air. It is something magical to one who tries it for the first time. . . . You do not know at first where it all comes from. It is the conjurer's trick in nature, equal to taking feathers enough to fill a bed out of a hat. When you had done, but yet scraped the almost bare stem, they still overflowed your hand as before. . . . As the flowerets are opening and liberating themselves, showing their red extremities, it has the effect of a changeable color.

Ah, then, the brook beyond, its rippling wawaters and its sunny sands. They made me forget that it was winter. Where springs oozed out of the soft bank over the dead leaves and the green sphagnum, they had melted the snow, or the snow had melted as it fell perchance, and the rabbits had sprinkled the mud about on the snow. The sun reflected from the sandy, gravelly bottom, sometimes a bright sunny streak no bigger than your finger reflected from a ripple as from a prism, and the sunlight reflected from a hundred points of the surface of the rippling brook, enabled me to realize summer. . . .

Having gone a quarter of a mile beyond the bridge where C. calls this his Spanish Brook, I looked back from the top of the hill into this deep dell, where the white pines stood thick, rising one above another, reflecting the sunlight, so soft and warm by contrast with the snow, as never in summer, for the idea of warmth prevailed over the cold which the snow suggested, though I saw through and between them to a distant snow-clad hill, and also to oaks red with their dry leaves, and maple limbs were mingled with the pines. I was on the verge of seeing something, but I did not. If I had been alone, and had had more leisure, I might have seen something to report.

Now we are on Fair Haven, still but a snow plain. Far down the river the shadows on Conantum are bluish. . . . The sun is half an hour high, perhaps. Standing near the outlet of the pond, I look up and down the river with delight, it is so warm, and the air is notwithstanding so clear. When I invert my head and look at the woods half a mile down the stream, they suddenly sink lower in the horizon, and are removed full two miles off. Yet the air is so clear that I seem to see every stem and twig with beautiful distinctness. The fine tops of the trees are so relieved against the sky, that I never cease to admire the minute subdivisions. It is

the same when I look up the stream. A bare hickory under Lee's Cliff seen against the sky becomes an interesting, even beautiful object to behold. I think, where have I been staying all these days? I will surely come here again.

Jan. 25, 1853. . . . I have noticed that leaves are green and violets bloom later where a bank has been burnt over in the fall, as if the fire warmed it. Saw to-day where a creeping juniper had been burnt, radical leaves of Johnswort, thistle, clover, a dandelion, etc., as well as sorrel and veronica.

Jan. 25, 1856. . . . A closed pitch pine cone, gathered January 22d, opened last night in my chamber. If you would be convinced how differently armed the squirrel is naturally for dealing with pitch pine cones, just try to get one open with your teeth. He who extracts the seeds from a single closed cone, with the aid of a knife, will be constrained to confess that the squirrel earns his dinner. He has the key to this conical and spiny chest of many apartments. He sits on a post vibrating his tail, and twirls it as a plaything. So is a man commonly a locked-up chest to us, to open whom, unless we have the key of sympathy, will make our hearts bleed.

Jan. 25, 1858. . . . What a rich book might be made about buds, including, perhaps, sprouts.

The impregnable, vivacious willow catkins, but half asleep along the twigs, under the armor of their black scales, the birch and oak sprouts, the rank and lusty dogwood sprouts, the sound, red buds of the blueberry, the small pointed red buds, close to the twig, of the panicled andromeda, the large yellowish buds of the swamp pink, etc. How healthy and vivacious must he be who would treat of these things.

You must love the crust of the earth on which you dwell more than the sweet crust of any bread or cake; you must be able to extract nutriment out of a sand heap. . . .

The creditor is servant to his debtor, especially if the latter is about paying any his due. I am amused to see what airs men take upon themselves when they have money to pay me, no matter how long they have deferred it. They imagine that they are my benefactors or patrons, and send me word graciously that, *if I will come to their houses*, they will pay me, when it is their business to come to me.

Jan. 25, 1860. . . . When the river begins to break up, it becomes clouded like a mackerel sky, but in this case, the blue portions are where the current clearing away the ice beneath begins to show dark. The current of the water striking the ice breaks it up at last into portions of the same form with those which the wind gives to vapor.

Jan. 26, 1840. Constantly, as it were, through a remote skylight, I have glimpses of a serene friendship-land, and know the better why brooks murmur and violets grow.

Jan. 26, 1841. I have as much property as I can command and use. If by a fault in my character I do not derive my just revenues, there is virtually a mortgage on my inheritance. A man's wealth is never entered in the registrar's office. Wealth does not come in along the great thoroughfares, it does not float on the Erie or Pennsylvania canal, but is imported by a solitary track without bustle or competition from a brave industry to a quiet mind.

I had a dream last night which had reference to an act in my life, in which I had been most disinterested, and true to my highest instinct, but completely failed in realizing my hopes; and now, after so many months, in the stillness of sleep, complete justice was rendered me. It was a divine remuneration. In my waking hours, I could not have conceived of such retribution; the presumption of desert would have damned the whole. But now I was permitted to be not so much a subject as a partner to that retribution. It was the award of divine justice which will at length be, and is even now, accomplished.

Good writing as well as good acting will be

obedience to conscience. There must not be a particle of will or whim mixed with it. If we can listen we shall hear. By reverently listening to the inner voice, we may reinstate ourselves on the pinnacle of humanity.

Jan. 27, 1841. In the compensation of the dream, there was no implied loss to any, but immeasurable advantage to all.

The punishment of sin is not positive as is the reward of virtue.

For a flower, I like the name pansy or *pensée* best of any.

Jan. 26, 1852. Whatever wit has been produced on the spur of the moment will bear to be reconsidered and reformed with phlegm. The arrow had best not be loosely shot. The most transient and passing remark must be reconsidered by the writer, made sure and warranted, as if the earth had rested on its axle to back it, and all the natural forces lay behind it. The writer must direct his sentence as carefully and leisurely as the marksman his rifle, who is sitting and with a rest, with patent sights and conical balls beside. He must not merely seem to speak the truth. He must really speak it. If you foresee that a part of your essay will topple down after the lapse of time, throw it down now yourself.

A tree seen against other trees is a mere

dark mass, but against the sky it has parts, has symmetry and expansion. . . . The thousand fine points and tops of the trees delight me. They are the plumes and standards and bayonets of a host that march to victory over the earth. The trees are handsome toward the heavens, as well as up their boles. They are good for other things than boards and shingles.

Obey the spur of the moment. These accumulated it is that make the impulse and the impetus of the life of genius. These are the spongioles and rootlets by which its trunk is fed. If you neglect the moments, if you cut off your fibrous roots, what but a languishing life is to be expected. Let the spurs of countless moments goad us incessantly into life. I feel the spur of the moment thrust deep into my side. The present is an inexorable rider. The moment always spurs either with a sharp or a blunt spur. Are my sides calloused? Let us trust the rider that he knows the way, that he knows when speed and effort are required. What other impulse do we wait for?

Let us preserve religiously, secure, protect the coincidence of our life with the life of nature. Else what are heat and cold, day and night, sun, moon, and stars to us? Was it not from sympathy with the present life of nature that we were born at this epoch rather than at

another? . . . My life as essentially belongs to the present as that of a willow tree in the spring. Now, now, its catkins expand, its yellow bark shines, its sap flows, now or never must you make whistles of it. Get the day to back you. Let it back you, and the night.

The truest account of heaven is the fairest, and I will accept none which disappoints expectation. It is more glorious to expect a better, than to enjoy a worse.

When the thermometer is down to 20°, the streams of thought tinkle underneath like the rivers under the ice. Thought, like the ocean, is nearly of one temperature. . . .

In winter we will think brave, hardy, and most native thoughts. Then the tender summer birds are flown.

In few countries do they enjoy so fine a contrast of summer and winter. We really have four seasons, each incredible to the other. Winter cannot be mistaken for summer here. Though I see the boat turned up on the shore, and half buried under snow, as I walk over the invisible river, summer is far away with its rustling reeds. It only suggests the want of thrift, the carelessness of its owner.

Poetry implies the whole truth, philosophy expresses a particle of it.

Would you see your mind, look into the sky.

Would you know your own moods, be weather-wise. He whom the weather disappoints, disappoints himself.

Let all things give way to the impulse of expression. It is the bud unfolding, the perennial spring. As well stay the spring. Who shall resist the thaw? . . .

The word is well naturalized or rooted that can be traced back to a Celtic original. It is like getting out stumps and fat pine roots. . . .

Nature never indulges in exclamations, never says ah! or alas! She is not French. She is a plain writer, uses few gestures, does not add to her verbs, uses few adverbs, no expletives. I find that I use many words for the sake of emphasis, which really add nothing to the force of my sentences, and they look relieved the moment I have canceled these, words which express my mood, my conviction, rather than the simple truth.

Youth supplies us with colors, age with canvas. . . . Paint is costly. . . . I think the heavens have had but one coat of paint since I was a boy, and their blue is paled and dingy and worn off in many places. I cannot afford to give them another coat. Where is the man so rich that he can give the earth a second coat of green in his manhood, or the heavens a second coat of blue. Our paints are all mixed when

we are young. . . . You would not suspect that some men's heavens had ever been azure or celestial, but that their painter had cheated them. . . .

It is good to break and smell the black birch twigs now. — The lichens look rather bright today. . . . When they are bright and expanded, is it not a sign of a thaw or of rain? The beauty of lichens with their scalloped leaves, the small attractive fields, the crinkled edge! I could study a single piece of bark for hours. How they flourish! I sympathize with their growth. . . .

From these cliffs at this moment, the clouds in the west have a singular brassy color, and they are arranged in an unusual manner. A new disposition of the clouds will make the most familiar country appear foreign, like Tartary or Arabia Felix. . . .

Jan. 26, 1853. Up river on ice, 9 A. M., above Pantry. A sharp cutting air. This is a pretty good winter morning, however. Not one of the rarer. There are from time to time mornings, both in summer and winter, when especially the world seems to begin anew, beyond which memory need not go, for not behind them is yesterday and our past life, when as in the morning of a hoar frost there are visible the effects as of a certain creative energy. The world has visibly been recreated in the night.

Mornings of creation I call them. In the midst of these marks of a creative energy recently active, while the sun is rising with more than usual splendor, I look back for the era of this creation not into the night, but to a dawn for which no man ever rose early enough — a morning which carries us back beyond the Mosaic creation, where crystallizations are fresh and unmelted. It is the poet's hour. Mornings when men are new born, men who have the seeds of life in them. It should be a part of my religion to be abroad then. This is not one of those mornings, but a clear, cold, airy winter day.

It is surprising how much room there is in nature if a man will follow his proper path. In these broad fields, in these extensive woods, on this stretching river, I never meet a walker. Passing behind the farm-houses, I see no man out. Perhaps I do not meet so many men as I should have met three centuries ago when the Indian hunter roamed these woods. I enjoy the retirement and solitude of an early settler. Men have cleared some of the earth, which is no doubt an advantage to the walker. I see a man sometimes chopping in the woods, or planting or hoeing in a field at a distance, and yet there may be a lyceum meeting in the evening, and there is a book shop and library in the village,

and five times a day I can be whirled to Boston in an hour. . . .

A slight fine snow has fallen in the night and drifted before the wind. I observe that it is so distributed over the ice as to show equal spaces of bare ice and of snow at pretty regular distances. I have seen the same phenomenon on the surface of snow in fields as if the little drifts disposed themselves according to the same law that makes waves of water. There is now a fine steam-like snow blowing over the ice, which continually lodges here and there, and forthwith a little drift accumulates. But why does it lodge at such regular intervals? I see this fine drifting snow in the air, ten or twelve feet high at a distance. Perhaps it may have to do with the manner in, or the angle at, which the wind strikes the earth.

Jan. 26, 1855 . . . P. M. A thick driving snow, something like, but less than, that of the 19th. There is a strong easterly wind. . . . I am afraid I have not described vividly enough the aspect of that lodging snow of the 19th and to-day partly. Imagine the innumerable twigs and boughs of the forest, as you stand in its midst, crossing each other at every conceivable angle on every side, from the ground to thirty feet in height, with each its zigzag wall of snow four or five inches high, so innumerable at dif

ferent distances, one behind another, that they completely close up the view like a loose woven and downy screen into which, however, stooping and winding, you ceaselessly advance. The wintriest scene, which perhaps can only be seen in perfection while the snow is yet falling before wind and thaw begin. Else you miss the delicate touch of the Master. A coarse woof and warp of snowy batting, leaving no space for a bird to perch. I see where a partridge has waddled through the snow still falling, making a continuous track. I look in the direction to which it points, and see the bird just skimming over the bushes fifteen rods off. The plumes of pitch pines are first filled up solid, and then they begin to make great snowy cassetêtes or pestles. In the fields the air is thick with driving snow. You see only a dozen rods into its warp and woof. It fills either this ear or that and your eyes with hard, cutting, blinding scales, if you face it. It is forming shelly drifts behind the walls, and stretches in folds across the roads. But in deep, withdrawn hollows in the woods the flakes at last come gently and deviously down, lodging on every twig and leaf, forming deep, downy, level beds between, and on the ice of the pools.

Jan. 26, 1856. . . . As I was talking with Miss Mary Emerson this evening, she said, "It

was not the fashion to be so original when I was young." She is readier to take my view, to look through my eyes for the time being, than any young woman that I know in the town.

Jan. 26, 1858. . . . One may eat and drink and sleep and digest, and do the ordinary duties of a man, and have no excuse for sending for a doctor, and yet he may have reason to doubt if his life is as valuable and divine as that of an oyster. He may be the very best citizen in the town, and yet it shall occur to him to prick himself with a pin to see if he is alive. It is wonderful how quiet, harmless, and ineffective a living creature may be. No more energy may it have than a fungus that lifts the bark of a decaying tree. I raised last summer a squash which weighed 123½ lbs. If it had fallen on me it would have made as deep and lasting an impression as most men do. I would just as lief know what it thinks about God as what most men think, or are said to think. In such a squash you have already got the bulk of a man. My man, perchance, when I have put such a question to him, opens his eyes for a moment, essays in vain to think, like a rusty firelock out of order, then calls for a plate of that same squash to eat, and goes to sleep, as it is called, and that is no great distance to go, surely.

Some men have a peculiar taste for bad words,

mouthing and licking them into lumpish shapes, as the bear treats her cubs, words like *tribal* and *ornamentation* which drag a dead tail after them. They will pick you out of a thousand the still-born words, the falsettoes, the wing-clipt and lame words, as if only the false notes caught their ears. They cry encore to all the discords.

The cocks crow in the yard, and the hens cackle and scratch all this winter. Eggs must be plenty.

Jan. 1840. You might as well think to go in pursuit of the rainbow, and embrace it on the next hill as to embrace the complete idea of poetry even in thought. The best book is only an advertisement of it, such as is sometimes sewed in with its cover. It has a logic more severe than the logician's.

Jan. 27, 1840. What a tame life we are living! How little heroic it is! Let us devise never so perfect a system of living, and straightway the soul leaves it to shuffle along its own way alone. It is easy enough to establish a durable and harmonious routine. Immediately all parts of nature consent to it. The sun-dial still points to the noon mark, and the sun rises and sets for it. The neighbors are never fatally obstinate when such a scheme is to be instituted, but forthwith all lend a hand, ring the bell, bring fuel and lights, put by work, and don their

best garments, with an earnest conformity which matches the operations of nature. There is always a present and extant life which men combine to uphold, though its insufficiency is manifest enough. Still the sing-song goes on. Only make something take the place of something, and men will behave as if it were the thing they wanted. They *must* behave at any rate, and will work up any material.

Jan. 27, 1852. The peculiarity of a work of genius is the absence of the speaker from his speech. He is but the medium. You behold a perfect work, but you do not behold the worker. I read its page, but it is as free from any man that can be remembered as an impassable desert. — I think that the one word which will explain the Shakespeare miracle is unconsciousness. If he had known his own comparative eminence, he would not have failed to publish it incessantly, though Bacon did not. There probably has been no more conscious age than the present. . . .

I do not know but thoughts written down thus in a journal might be printed in the same form with greater advantage than if the related ones were brought together into separate essays. They are now allied to life, and are seen by the reader not to be far-fetched. It is . . . less artful. I feel that in the other case I should have no proper frame for my sketches. Mere

facts and names and dates communicate more than we suspect. Whether the flower looks better in the nosegay than in the meadow where it grew, and we had to wet our feet to get it! Is the scholastic air any advantage?

Jan. 28, 1852. Perhaps I can never find so good a setting for my thoughts as I shall thus have taken them out of. The crystal never sparkles more brightly than in the cavern. The world has always loved best the fable with the moral. The children could read the fable alone — the grown up read both. The truth so told has the best advantage of the most abstract statement, for it is not the less universally applicable. Where else will you ever find the cement for your thoughts? How will you ever rivet them together without leaving the marks of the file? Yet Plutarch did not so. Montaigne did not so. Men have written travels in this form, but perhaps no man's daily life has been rich enough to be journalized. Our life should be so active and progressive as to be a journey. Our meals should all be of journey cake and hasty pudding. We should be more alert, see the sun rise, not keep fashionable hours, enter a house, our own house as a khan or caravansary. At noon I did not dine, I ate my journey cake, I quenched my thirst at a spring or a brook. As I sat at the table, the hospitality was so perfect and the re-

past so sumptuous that I seemed to be breaking my fast upon a bank in the midst of an arduous journey, that the water seemed to be a living spring, the napkins grass, the conversation free as the winds, and the servants that waited on us were our simple desires. Cut off from Pilpay and Æsop the moral alone at the bottom, would that content you?

Jan. 27, 1853. Trench says a wild man is a *willed* man; well, then, a man of will who does what he wills or wishes, a man of hope and of the future tense, for not only the obstinate is willed, but, far more, the constant and persevering. The obstinate man, properly speaking, is one who wills not. The perseverance of the saints is positive willedness, not a mere passive willingness. The fates are wild, for they *will*, and the Almighty is wild above all, as fate is.

What are our fields but felds or felled woods. They bear a more recent name than the woods, suggesting that previously the earth was covered with woods. Always in a new country a field is a clearing.

Jan. 27, 1854. I have an old account book found in Dea. R. Brown's garret since his death. The first leaf or two is gone. Its cover is brown paper, on which, amid many marks and scribblings, I find written: —

"Mr. Ephraim Jones
His Wast Book
Anno Domini
1742."

It extends from November 8, 1742, to June 20, 1743, inclusive. It appears without doubt from the contents of this book that [this Jones] is the one of whom Shattuck writes in his history that he "married Mary Hayward, 1728, and died Nov. 29, 1756, aged 51, having been captain, town-clerk, and otherwise distinguished." His father's name was Ephraim, and he had a son Ephraim. . . . The book is filled with familiar Concord names, the grandfathers and great-grandfathers of the present generation. Dr. Hartshorn, who lived to be ninety-two, and Dr. Temple send to the store once or twice. It is more important now what was bought than who bought it. The articles most commonly bought are mohair (a kind of twist to sew on buttons with), usually with buttons, rum, often only a gill to drink at the store (more of these than anything else), salt, molasses, shalloon, fish, calico, some sugar, a castor hat, almanac, psalter, and sometimes primer and testament, paper, knee-buckles and shoe-buckles, garters and spurs, . . . deer skins, a fan, a cart-whip, various kinds of cloth and trimmings, . . . gloves, a spring knife, an ink-horn, a gun cap,

spice, . . . timber, iron, earthenware, etc., no tea (I am in doubt about one or two entries), nor coffee, nor meal, nor flour. Of the last two they probably raised all they wanted. Credit is frequently given for timber, and once for cloth brought to the store.

On the whole, it is remarkable how little provision was sold at the store. The inhabitants raised almost everything for themselves. Chocolate is sold once. Rum, salt, molasses, fish, a biscuit with their drink, a little spice and the like, are all that commonly come under this head that I remember. On a loose piece of paper . . . is Jonathan Dwight's (innholder's (?)) bill against the estate of Captain Ephraim Jones for entertainment, etc. (apparently he treated his company), at divers times for half a dozen years, amounting to over £146. — The people apparently made their own cloth and even thread, and hence for the most part bought only buttons and mohair and a few trimmings. . . .

Jan. 18th '42 (3) "John Melvin Cr. by 1 Grey fox 0–2–3."

Feb. 14 '42 (3) "Aaron Parker Cr. by 100 squirell skins 0–6–3." Deer skins were sold at from ten to seventeen shillings. Sometimes it is written "old" or "new tenor." Many of the customers came from as far as Harvard or much farther. . . .

No butter, nor rice, nor oil, nor candles are sold. They must have used candles, made their own butter, and done without rice. There is no more authentic history of those days than this "Wast Book" contains, and relating to money matters, it is more explicit than almost any other statement. Something *must* be said. Each line contains and states explicitly a fact. It is the best of evidence of several facts. It tells distinctly and authoritatively who sold, who bought, the article, amount, and value, and the date. You could not easily crowd more facts into one line. You are informed when the doctor or deacon had a new suit of clothes by the charge for mohair, buttons and trimmings, or a castor hat, and here also is entered the rum which ran down their very throats. . . .

We begin to die not in our senses and extremities, but in our divine faculties. Our members may be sound, our sight and hearing perfect, but our genius and imagination betray signs of decay. You tell me that you are growing old, and are troubled to see without glasses, but this is unimportant if the divine faculty of the seer shows no signs of decay.

Jan. 27, 1857. . . . The most poetic and truest account of objects is generally given by those who first observe them, or the discoverers of them, whether a sharper perception and

curiosity in them led to the discovery or the greater novelty more inspired their report. Accordingly, I love most to read the accounts of a country, its natural productions and curiosities, by those who first settled it, and also the earliest, though often unscientific writers on natural science.

Jan. 27, 1858. P. M. To Hill and beyond. It is so mild and moist as I saunter along by the wall and east of the hill that I remember or anticipate one of those warm rain storms in the spring when the earth is just laid bare, the wind is south, and the Cladonia lichens are swollen and lusty with moisture, your foot sinking into them, and pressing the water out as from a sponge, and the sandy places also are drinking it in. You wander indefinitely in a beaded coat, wet to the skin of your legs, sit on moss-clad rocks and stumps, and hear the lisping of migrating sparrows flitting amid the shrub oaks, sit long at a time, still, and have your thoughts. A rain which is as serene as fair weather, suggesting fairer weather than was ever seen. You could hug the clods that defile you. You feel the fertilizing influence of the rain in your mind. The part of you that is wettest is fullest of life, like the lichens. You discover evidences of immortality not known to divines. You cease to die. You detect some buds and sprouts

of life. Every step in the old rye field is on virgin soil. — And then the rain comes thicker and faster than before, thawing the remaining part of the ground, detaining the migrating bird, and you turn your back to it, full of serene, contented thoughts, soothed by the steady dropping on the withered leaves, more at home for being abroad, sinking at each step deep into the thawing earth, gladly breaking through the gray rotting ice. The dullest sounds seem sweetly modulated by the air. You leave your tracks in fields of spring rye, scaring the fox-colored sparrows along the woodsides, . . . full of joy and expectation, seeing nothing but beauty, hearing nothing but music, as free as the fox-colored sparrow, . . . not indebted to any academy or college for this expansion, but chiefly to the April sun which shineth on all alike, not encouraged by men in your walks, not by the divines or the professors, and to the law-giver an outlaw. . . . Steadily the eternal rain falls, drip, drip, drip, the mist drives and clears your sight, the wind blows and warms your sitting on that sandy upland that April day.

Jan. 27, 1859. I see some of those little cells, perhaps of a wasp or bee, made of clay or clayey mud. It suggests that those insects were the first potters. They look somewhat like small stone jugs.

Jan. 27, 1860. . . . When you think your walk is profitless and a failure, and you can hardly persuade yourself not to return, it is on the point of being a success, for then you are in that subdued and knocking mood to which nature never fails to open.

Jan. 28, 1841. No innocence can quite stand up under suspicion, if it is conscious of being suspected. In the company of one who puts a mean construction upon your actions, they are apt really to deserve such a construction. While in that society I can never retrieve myself. Attribute to me a great motive and I shall not fail to have one, but a mean one, and the fountain of virtue will be poisoned by the suspicion. Show men unlimited faith as the coin with which you will deal with them, and they will invariably exhibit the best wares they have. I would meet men as the friend of all their virtue, and the foe of all their vice, for no man is the partner of his guilt.

If you suspect me, you will never see me, but all our intercourse will be the politest leave-taking. I shall constantly defer and apologize, and postpone myself in your presence. The self-defender is accursed in the sight of gods and men; he is a superfluous knight who serves no lady in the land. He will find in the end that he has been fighting windmills, and has battered

his mace to no purpose. The injured man resisting his fate is like a tree struck by lightning which rustles its sere leaves the winter through, not having vigor enough to cast them off. . . .

Resistance is a very wholesome and delicious morsel at times. When Venus advanced against the Greeks with resistless valor, it was by far the most natural attitude into which the poet could throw his hero, to make him resist heroically. To a devil one might yield gracefully, but a god would be a worthy foe, and would pardon the affront. . . .

Let your mood determine the form of salutation, and approach the creature with a natural nonchalance, as though he were anything but what he is, and you were anything but what you are, — as though he were he, and you were you — in short, as though he were so insignificant that it did not signify — and so important that it did not import.

Jan. 28, 1852. . . . They showed me Johnny Riorden to-day, with one thickness of ragged cloth over his little shirt for all this cold weather, with shoes having large holes in the toes into which the snow got, as he said, without an outer garment, walking a mile to school every day over the bleakest of causeways where I know, by my own experience, a grown man could not

walk at times without freezing his ears, if they were exposed, but infant blood circulates faster. The clothes with countless patches which claimed descent from pantaloons of mine set as if his mother had fitted them to a tea-kettle first. This little specimen of humanity, this tender gobbet for the fates cast into a cold world with a torn lichen leaf wrapped about him; is man so cheap that he cannot be clothed but with a mat or rag? that we should bestow on him our cold victuals? . . . Let the mature rich wear the rags and insufficient clothing, let the infant poor wear the purple and fine linen. I shudder when I think of the fate of innocency. . . . A charity which dispenses the crumbs which fall from its overloaded tables, which are left after its feasts, whose waste and whose example produced that poverty!

3 P. M. Went round by Tuttle's road and so out on to the Walden road. These warmer days the wood-chopper finds that the wood cuts easier than when it had the frost in its sap-wood, though it does not split so readily. Thus every change in the weather has its influence on him, and is appreciated by him in a peculiar way. The wood-cutter and his practices and experiences are more to be attended to. His accidents, perhaps more than any others, should mark the epochs in the winter day. Now that

the Indian is gone, he stands nearest to nature. Who has written the history of his day? How far still is the writer of books from the man, his old playmate it may be, who chops in the woods! There are ages between them. Homer refers to the progress of the woodcutter's work to mark the time of day on the plains of Troy, and the inference commonly is that he lived in a more primitive state of society than the present. But I think this is a mistake. Like proves like in all ages, and the fact that I myself should take pleasure in referring to just such simple and peaceful labors which are always proceeding, that the contrast itself always attracts the civilized poet to what is rudest and most primitive in his contemporaries, all this rather proves a certain interval between the poet and the chopper whose labor he refers to, than an unusual nearness to him, on the principle that familiarity breeds contempt. Homer is to be subjected to a very different kind of criticism from any he has received. That reader who most fully appreciates the poet, and derives the greatest pleasure from his work, himself lives in circumstances most like those of the poet himself.

About Brister's spring the ferns which have been covered with snow are still quite green. The skunk-cabbage in the water is already pushed up, and I find the pinkish head of flowers within its spathe is bigger than a pea.

Jan. 28, 1853. Saw three ducks sailing in the river . . . this afternoon, black with white on wings, though these two or three have been the coldest days of the winter, and the river is generally closed.

Jan. 28, 1857. Am again surprised to see a song sparrow sitting for hours on our wood-pile . . . in the midst of snow in the yard. It is unwilling to move. People go to the pump, and the cat and dog walk round the wood-pile without starting it. I examine it at my leisure through a glass. Remarkable that this coldest of all winters this bird should remain. Perhaps it is no more comfortable this season farther south where they are accustomed to abide. In the afternoon this sparrow joined a flock of tree sparrows on the bare ground west of the house. It was amusing to see the tree sparrows wash themselves, standing in the puddles and tossing the water over themselves. They have had no opportunity to wash for a month perhaps, there having been no thaw. The song sparrow did not go off with them.

Jan. 28, 1858. Minott has a sharp ear for the note of any migrating bird. Though confined to his dooryard by rheumatism, he commonly hears them sooner than the widest rambler. May be he listens all day for them, or they come and sing over his house, report themselves to

him, and receive their season ticket. He is never at fault. If he says he heard such a bird, though sitting by his chimney side, you may depend on it. He can swear through glass. He has not spoiled his ears by attending lectures and caucuses. The other day the rumor went that a flock of geese had been seen flying over Concord, mid-winter as it was by the almanac. I traced it to Minott, and yet I was compelled to doubt. I had it directly that he had heard them within a week. I made haste to him, his reputation was at stake. He said that he stood in his shed one of the late muggy, April-like mornings, when he heard one short, but distinct *honk* of a goose. He went into the house, took his cane, exerted himself, or that sound imparted strength to him, lame as he was, went up on to the hill, a thing he had not done for a year, that he might hear all around. He saw nothing, but heard the note again. It came from over the brook. It was a wild goose. He was sure of it. He thought that the back of the winter was broken, if it had any this year, but he feared such a winter would kill him too. Hence the rumor spread and grew. I was silent, pondered, and abandoned myself to unseen guides. I drew into my mind all its members like the tortoise. Suddenly the truth flashed on me, and I *remembered* that within a week I had heard of

a box at the tavern which had come by railroad express containing three wild geese, and directed to his neighbor over the brook. The April-like morning had excited one so that he honked, and Minott's reputation acquired new lustre. . . .

As I come through the village at 11 P. M., the sky is completely overcast, and the perhaps thin clouds are very distinctly pink or reddish, somewhat as if reflecting a distant fire, but this phenomenon is universal, all round and overhead. I suspect there is a red aurora borealis behind.

Jan. 29, 1840. A friend in history looks like some premature soul. The nearest approach to a community of love in these days is like the distant breaking of waves on the sea-shore. An ocean there must be, for it washes our beach. This alone do all men sail for, trade for, plow for, preach for, fight for.

The Greeks, like those of the south generally, expressed themselves with more facility than we, in distinct and lively images, and so far as relates to the grace and completeness with which they treated the subjects suited to their genius, they must be allowed to retain their ancient supremacy. But a rugged and uncouth array of thought, though never so modern, may rout them at any moment. It remains for other than Greeks to write the literature of the next century.

Æschylus had a clear eye for the commonest things. His genius was only an enlarged common sense. He adverts with chaste severity to all natural facts. His sublimity is Greek sincerity and simpleness, naked wonder at what mythology had not helped to explain. He is competent to express any of the common manly feelings. If his hero is to make a boast, it does not lack fullness, it is as boastful as could be desired. He has a flexible mouth and can fill it readily with strong, sound words, so that you will say the man's speech wants nothing. He has left nothing unsaid, but has actually wiped his lips of it. Whatever the common eye sees at all and expresses as best it may, he sees uncommonly, and expresses with rare completeness. The multitude that thronged the theatre could no doubt go along with him to the end. — The Greeks had no transcendent geniuses like Milton and Shakespeare, whose merit only posterity could fully appreciate.

The social condition is the same in all ages. Æschylus was undoubtedly alone and without sympathy in his simple reverence for the mystery of the universe.

Jan. 29, 1841. There is something proudly thrilling in the thought that this obedience to conscience and trust in God, which is so solemnly preached in extremities and arduous cir-

cumstances, is only a retreat to one's self and reliance on one's own strength. In trivial circumstances I find myself sufficient to myself, and in the most momentous, I have no ally but myself, and must silently put by their harm by my own strength, as I did with the former. As my own hand bent aside the willow in my path, so must my single arm put to flight the devil and his angels. God is not our ally when we shrink, and neuter when we are bold. . . . When you trust, do not lay aside your armor, but put it on and buckle it tighter. If by reliance on the gods I have disbanded one of my forces, then was it poor policy. . . . There is more of God and divine help in a man's little finger than in idle prayer and trust.

The best and bravest deed is that which the whole man, heart, lungs, hands, fingers, and toes at any time prompt. Each hanger-on in the purlieus of the camp . . . must fall into the line of march. If a single sutler delay to make up his pack, then suspect the fates and consult the oracles again. This is the meaning of integrity; this it is to be an integer, and not a fraction. Be even for all virtuous ends, but odd for all vice. . . .

Friends will have to be introduced each time they meet. They will be eternally strange to one another, and when they have mutually ap-

propriated the last hour, they will go and gather a new measure of strangeness for the next. They are like two boughs crossed in the wood, which play backwards and forwards upon one another in the wind, and only wear into each other, but never does the sap of the one flow into the pores of the other, for then the wind would no more draw from them those strains which enchanted the wood. They are not two united, but rather one divided.

Of all strange and unaccountable things this journalizing is the strangest. It will allow nothing to be predicated of it. Its good is not good, nor its bad, bad. If I make a huge effort to expose my innermost and richest wares to light, my counter seems cluttered with the meanest home-made stuff, but after months or years, I may discover the wealth of India, and whatever rarity is brought overland from Cathay, in that confused heap, and what seemed perhaps a festoon of dried apple or pumpkin will prove a string of Brazilian diamonds, or pearls from Coromandel.

Men lie behind the barrier of a relation as effectually concealed as the landscape by a mist; and when at length some unforeseen accident throws me into a new attitude toward them, I am astounded as if for the first time I saw the sun on the hillside. They lie out before me like

a new order of things, as when the master meets his pupil as a man. Then first do we stand under the same heavens, and master and pupil alike go down the resistless ocean stream together.

Jan. 29, 1852. We must be very active, if we would be clean, live our own life and not a languishing and scurvy one. The trees which are stationary are covered with parasites, especially those which have grown slowly. The air is filled with the fine sporules of countless mosses, algæ, lichens, fungi, which settle and plant themselves on all quiet surfaces. Under the nails and between the joints of the fingers of the idle flourish crops of mildew, algæ, fungi, and other vegetable sloths, though they may be invisible, the lichens where life still exists, the fungi where decomposition has begun to take place, and the sluggard is soon covered with sphagnum. Algæ take root in the corners of his eyes, and lichens cover the bulbs of his fingers and his head. . . . This is the definition of dirt. We fall a prey to others of nature's tenants who take possession of the unoccupied house. With the utmost inward alacrity we have to wash and comb ourselves . . . to get rid of the adhering seeds. Cleanliness is by activity not to give any quiet shelf for the seeds of parasitic plants to take root on. . . .

The forcible writer does not go far for his

themes. His ideas are not far-fetched. He derives inspiration from his chagrins and his satisfactions. His theme being ever an instant one, his own gravity assists him, gives impetus to what he says. He does not speculate while others drudge for him.

I am often reminded that if I had bestowed on me the wealth of Crœsus, my aims must still be the same, and my means essentially the same. . . .

Few are the days when the telegraph harp rises into a pure, clear melody. The wind may blow strong or soft in this or that direction, naught will you hear but a low hum or murmur, or even a buzzing sound, but at length when some undistinguishable zephyr blows, when the conditions, not easy to be detected, arrive, it suddenly and unexpectedly rises into melody, as if a god had touched it, and fortunate is the walker who chances to be within hearing. So is it with the lyres of bards. For the most part it is only a feeble and ineffectual hum that comes from them, which leads you to expect the melody you do not hear. When the gale is modified, when the favorable conditions occur and the indescribable coincidence takes place, then there is music. Of a thousand buzzing strings, only one yields music. It is like the hum of the shaft or other machinery of a steamboat,

which at length might become music in a divine hand. . . .

Heard C. lecture to-night. It was a bushel of nuts, perhaps the most original lecture I ever heard; ever so unexpected, not to be foretold, and so sententious that you could not look at him, and take his thought at the same time. You had to give your undivided attention to the thoughts, for you were not assisted by set phrases or modes of speech intervening. There was no sloping up or down to or from his points. It was all genius, no talent. It required more close attention, more abstraction from surrounding circumstances than any lecture I have heard, for well as I know C., he more than any man disappoints my expectation. When I meet him in the dark, hear him, I cannot realize that I ever saw him before. He will be strange, unexpected to his best acquaintance. I cannot associate the lecturer with the companion of my walks. The lecture was from so original and peculiar a point of view, yet just to himself in the main, that I doubt if three in the audience apprehended a tithe of what he said. It was so hard to hear that doubtless few made the exertion, a thick succession of mountain passes, and no intermediate slopes and plains. Other lectures, even the best, in which so much space is given to the elaborate development of a few

ideas, seemed somewhat meagre in comparison. Yet it would be how much more glorious if talent were added to genius, if there were a just arrangement and development of the thoughts, if each step were not a leap, but he ran a space to take a yet higher leap. Most of the spectators sat in front of the performer, but here was one who, by accident, sat all the while on one side, and his report was peculiar and startling.

Jan. 30, 1852. Channing's lecture was full of wise, acute, and witty observations, yet most of the audience did not know but it was mere incoherent and reckless verbiage and nonsense. I lose my respect for people who do not know what is good and true. I know full well that readers and hearers, with the fewest exceptions, ask me for my second best.

Jan. 29, 1854. A very cold morning. Mercury 18° below zero. — Varro says *arista*, the beard of grain, is so called because it dries first (*quod arescit prima*), the grain, *granum*, is *a gerendo*, for the object of planting is that this may be borne. "But the spica or ear which the rustics call speca, as they have received it from their forefathers, seems to be named from *spe* (hope), *eam enim quod sperant fore*, because they hope that this will be hereafter."

Jan. 29, 1856. . . . It is observable that not only the moose and the wolf disappear before

the civilized man, but even many species of insects, such as the black fly and the almost microscopic "No-see-em." How imperfect a notion have we commonly of what was the actual condition of the place where we dwell, three centuries ago.

Jan. 29, 1858. P. M. To Great Meadows at Copan. . . . Found some splendid fungi on old aspens used for a fence; quite firm, reddish white above, and bright vermilion beneath, or perhaps more scarlet, reflecting various shades as it is turned. It is remarkable that the upper side of the fungus, which must, as here, commonly be low on decaying wood, so that we look down on it, is not bright colored nor handsome, and it was only when I had broken it off and turned it over that I was surprised by its brilliant color. This intense vermilion (?) face, which would be known to every boy in the town if it were turned upward, faces the earth, and is discerned only by the curious naturalist. Its ear is turned down listening to the honest praises of the earth. It is like a light red velvet or damask. These silent and motionless fungi with their ears turned ever downward to the earth, revealing their bright color perchance only to the prying naturalist who turns them upward, remind me of the "Hear-all" of the story.

Jan. 29, 1860. . . . As usual, I now see, as I walk on the river and river meadow ice, thinly covered with the fresh snow, that conical rainbow, or parabola of rainbow-colored reflections from the myriad reflecting crystals of the snow, *i. e.*, as I walk toward the sun, always a little in advance of me, of course, the angle of reflection being equal to that of incidence.

Jan. 30, 1841. . . . The fashions of the wood are more fluctuating than those of Paris. Snow, rime, ice, green and dry leaves incessantly make new patterns. There are all the shapes and hues of the kaleidoscope, and the designs and ciphers of books of heraldry, in the outlines of the trees. Every time I see a nodding pine top, it seems as if a new fashion of wearing plumes had come into vogue. . . .

You glance up these paths, closely embraced by bent trees, as through the side aisles of a cathedral, and expect to hear a choir chanting from their depths. You are never so far in them as they are far before you. Their secret is where you are not, and where your feet can never carry you. . . .

Here is the distinct trail of a fox stretching a quarter of a mile across the pond. . . . I am curious to know what has determined its graceful curvatures, its greater or less spaces and distinctness, and how surely they were coincident

with the fluctuations of some mind, why they now lead me two steps to the right, and then three to the left. If these things are not to be called up and accounted for in the Lamb's Book of Life, I shall set them down for careless accountants. Here was the expression of the divine mind this morning. The pond was his journal, and last night's snow made a *tabula rasa* for him. I know which way a mind wended this morning, what horizon it faced, by the setting of these tracks, whether it moved slowly or rapidly, by the greater or less intervals and distinctness, for the swiftest step leaves yet a lasting trace. . . . Fair Haven pond is scored with the trails of foxes, and you may see where they have gamboled and gone through a hundred evolutions, which testify to a singular listlessness and leisure in nature.

Suddenly looking down the river, I saw a fox some sixty rods off making across the hills on my left. As the snow lay five inches deep, he made but slow progress, but it was no impediment to me. So yielding to the instinct of the chase, I tossed my head aloft, and bounded away, snuffing the air like a fox-hound, and spurning the world and human society at each bound. It seemed the woods rang with the hunter's horn, and Diana and all the satyrs joined in the chase and cheered me on. Olympian and

Elean youths were waving palms on the hills. In the meanwhile, I gained rapidly on the fox, but he showed a remarkable presence of mind, for instead of keeping up the face of the hill, which was steep and unwooded in that part, he kept along the slope in the direction of the forest, though he lost ground by it. Notwithstanding his fright, he took no step which was not beautiful. The course on his part was a series of most graceful curves. It was a sort of leopard canter, I should say, as if he were nowise impeded by the snow, but were husbanding his strength all the while. When he doubled, I wheeled and cut him off, bounding with fresh vigor, Antæus-like recovering my strength each time I touched the snow. Having got near enough for a fair view, just as he was slipping into the wood, I gracefully yielded him the palm. He ran as if there were not a bone in his back, occasionally dropping his muzzle to the snow for a rod or two, and then tossing his head aloft, when satisfied of his course. When he came to a declivity, he put his fore feet together, and slid down it like a cat. He trod so softly that you could not have heard from any nearness, and yet with such expression that it would not have been quite inaudible from any distance. So hoping this experience would prove a useful lesson to him, I returned to the village by the highway of the river.

Jan. 30, 1852. I feel as if I were gradually parting company with certain friends, just as I perceive familiar objects successively disappear when I am leaving my native town in the cars. . . .

After all, where is the flower lore? for the first book, not the last, should contain the poetry of flowers. The natural system may tell us the value of a plant in medicine or the arts, or for food, but neither it nor the Linnæan, to any great extent, tells us its chief value and significance to man, what in any measure accounts for its beauty, its flower-like properties. There will be pages about some fair flower's qualities as food or medicine, but perhaps not a sentence about its significance to the eye (as if the cowslip were better for greens than for yellows), about what children and all flower-lovers gather flowers for. [The book I refer to should be] not addressed to the cook, or the physician, or the dyer merely, but to the lovers of flowers young and old, the most poetical of books in which is breathed man's love of flowers.

Do nothing merely out of good resolutions. Discipline yourself only to yield to love. Suffer yourself to be attracted. It is in vain to write on chosen themes. We must wait till they have kindled a flame in our minds. There must be the . . . generating force of love behind every

effort destined to be successful. The cold resolve gives birth to, begets nothing. The theme that seeks me, not I, it. The poet's relation to his theme is the relation of lovers. It is no more to be courted. Obey, report.

Though they are cutting off the wood at Walden, it is not all loss. It makes some new and unexpected prospects. . . . As I stood on the partially cleared bank at the E. end of the pond, I looked S. over the side of the hill into a deep dell, still wooded, and saw not more than thirty rods off a chopper at his work. I was half a dozen rods distant from the standing wood, and I saw him through a vista between two trees. He appeared to me charmingly distinct as in a picture of which the two trees were the frame. He was seen against the snow on the hillside beyond. I could distinguish each part of his dress perfectly, and the axe with distinct outline, as he raised it above his head, the black iron against the snow. I could hear every stroke distinctly. Yet I should have deemed it ridiculous to call to him, he appeared so distant. He appeared with the same distinctness as objects seen through a pin hole in a card. This was the effect rather than what would have been by comparison of him, his size with the nearer trees between which I saw him, and which made the canopied roof of the grove far above his

head. It was, perhaps, one of those coincidences and effects which have made men painters. I could not behold him as an actual man. He was more ideal than in any picture I have seen. He refused to be seen as actual; far in the hollow, yet somewhat enlightened aisles of this wooded dell. Some scenes will thus present themselves as picture, . . . subjects for the pencil, . . . distinctly marked. They do not require the aid of genius to idealize them. They must be seen as ideal. . . .

I am afraid to travel much, or to famous places, lest it might completely dissipate the mind. Then I am sure that what we observe at home, if we observe anything, is of more importance than what we observe abroad. The far-fetched is of the least value. What we observe in traveling are, to some extent, the accidents of the body; what we observe when sitting at home are, in the same proportion, phenomena of the mind itself. A wakeful night will yield as much thought as a long journey. If we try thoughts by their quality, not their quantity, I may find that a restless night will yield more than the longest journey. . . .

It is remarkable that there is no man so coarse and insensible but he can be profane, can pronounce the word "God" with emphasis in the woods when anything happens to disturb

him, as a spoiled child loves to see what liberties he can presume to take. I am only astonished that B—— should think it any daring, that he should believe in God so much, look round to see if his auditors appreciated his boldness.

Jan. 30, 1854. Another cold morning. 13° below zero. . . . This morning, though not so cold by a degree or two as yesterday morning, the cold has got more into the house. . . . The sheets are frozen about the sleeper's face. The teamster's beard is white with ice. Last night I felt it stinging cold as I came up the street at nine o'clock. It bit my ears and face, but the stars shone all the brighter. The windows are all closed up with frost, as if they were of ground glass. . . . The snow is dry and squeaks under the feet, and the teams creak, as if they needed greasing, sounds associated with extremely cold weather.

P. M. Up river on ice and snow to Fair Haven Pond. . . . We look at every track in the snow. Every little while there is the track of a fox, may be the same one, across the river, turning aside sometimes to a muskrat's cabin or a point of ice where he has left some traces, and frequently the larger track of a hound which has followed his trail. . . . This road is so wide that you do not feel confined in it, and you never meet travelers with whom you have no sym-

pathy. The winter, cold and bound out, as it is, is thrown to us like a bone to a famishing dog, and we are expected to get the marrow out of it. While the milkmen in the outskirts are milking so many scores of cows before sunrise these winter mornings, it is our task to milk the winter itself. It is true it is like a cow that is dry, and our fingers are numb, and there is none to wake us up. Some desert the fields, and go into winter quarters in the city. They attend the oratorios, while the only music we countrymen hear is the squeaking of the snow under our boots. But the winter was not given us for no purpose. We must thaw its cold with our genialness. We are tasked to find out and appropriate all the nutriment it yields. If it is a cold and hard season, its fruit no doubt is the more concentrated and nutty. It took the cold and bleakness of November to ripen the walnut, but the human brain is the kernel which the winter itself matures. Not till then does its shell come off. . . . Because the fruits of the earth are already ripe, we are not to suppose there is no fruit left for winter to ripen. . . . Then is the great harvest of the year, the harvest of thought. All previous harvests are stubble to this, mere fodder and green crop. Our oil is winter-strained. Now we burn with a purer flame like the stars. — Shall we take refuge in cities in November?

Shall the nut fall green from the tree? Let not the year be disappointed of its crop. I knew a crazy man who walked into an empty pulpit one Sunday, and taking up a hymn book, remarked, "We have had a good fall for getting in corn and potatoes, let us sing Winter." So I say, "Let us sing winter." What else can we sing, and our voices be in harmony with the season? . . .

As we walked up the river, a little flock of chickadees, apparently, flew to us from a woodside fifteen rods off, and uttered their lively *day day day*, and followed us along a considerable distance, flitting by our side on the button-bushes and willows. It is the most, if not the only, sociable bird we have.

Jan. 30, 1856. . . . What a difference between life in the city and life in the country at present! between walking in Washington Street, threading your way between countless sledges and travelers over the discolored snow, and crossing Walden Pond, a spotless field of snow surrounded by woods, whose intensely blue shadows and your own are the only objects. What a solemn silence reigns here!

Jan. 30, 1859. How peculiar is the hooting of an owl; not shrill and sharp like the scream of a hawk, but full, round, and sonorous, waking the echoes of the wood.

Jan. 30, 1860. 2 P. M. To Nut Meadow

and White Pond road. Thermometer + 45°. Fair, with a few cumuli of indefinite outline in the N. and S., and dusky under sides. A gentle west wind and a blue haze. Thaws. . . . The ice has so melted on the meadows that I see where the muskrat has left his clamshells in a heap near the river side where there was a hollow in the bank. — The small water-bugs are gyrating abundantly in Nut Meadow Brook. It is pleasant also to see the very distinct ripple marks in the sand at the bottom, of late so rare a sight. I go through the piny field N. W. of Martial Miles's. There are no more beautiful natural parks than these pastures in which the white pines have sprung up spontaneously, standing at handsome intervals, where the wind chanced to let the seed lie at last, and the grass and blackberry vines have not yet been killed by them.

There are certain sounds invariably heard in warm and thawing days in winter, such as the crowing of cocks, the cawing of crows, and sometimes the gobbling of turkeys. The crow, flying high, touches the tympanum of the sky for us, and reveals the tone of it. What does it avail to look at a thermometer or barometer compared with listening to his note! He informs me that nature is in the tenderest mood possible, and I hear the very flutterings of her heart. — Crows

have singularly wild and suspicious ways. You will see a couple flying high, as if about their business, but, lo, they turn and circle and caw over your head again and again for a mile, and this is their business, as if a mile and an afternoon were nothing for them to throw away; this even in winter when they have no nests to be anxious about. But it is affecting to hear them cawing about their ancient seat . . . which the choppers are laying low. . . .

The snow flea seems to be a creature whose summer and prime of life is a thaw in the winter. It seems not merely to enjoy this interval like other animals, but then chiefly to exist. It is the creature of the thaw. Moist snow is its element. That thaw which merely excites the cock to sound his clarion, as it were, calls to life the snow flea.

Jan. 31, 1852. . . . I am repeatedly astonished by the coolness and obtuse bigotry with which some will appropriate the New Testament in conversation with you. It is as if they were to appropriate the sun, and stand between you and it, because they understood you had walked once by moonlight, though that was in the reflected light of the sun which you could not get directly. I have seen two persons conversing at a tea-table, both lovers of the New Testament, each in his own way, the one a lover of all

kindred expression of truth also, and yet the other appropriated the book wholly to herself, and took it for granted with singular or rather lamentable blindness and obtuseness that the former neither knew nor cared anything about it. Horace Greeley found some fault with me to the world, because I presumed to speak of the New Testament, using my own words and thoughts, and challenged me to a controversy. The one thought I had was that it would give me real pleasure to know that he loved it as sincerely and enlightenedly as I did. . . .

That work of man's must be vast indeed which, like the pyramids, looks blue in the horizon, as mountains. Few works of man rise high enough, and with breadth enough to be blued by the air between them and the spectator.

I hear my friend say, "I have lost my faith in men, there are none true, magnanimous, holy, etc., etc., meaning all the while that I do not possess those unattainable virtues. But, worm as I am, this is not wise in my friend, and I feel simply discouraged, so far as my relation to him is concerned. We must have infinite faith in each other. . . . He erects his want of faith as a barrier between us. When I hear a grown man or woman say, "Once I had faith in men, now I have not," I am inclined to ask, "Who are you whom the world has disappointed?

Have not you rather disappointed the world? There is the same ground for faith now that ever there was. It needs only a little love in you who complain so, to ground it on." For my own part, I am thankful there are those who come so near being my friends that they can be estranged from me. I had faith before; they would destroy the little I have. The mason asks but a narrow shelf to spring his brick from; man requires only an infinitely narrower one to spring the arch of faith from. . . .

I am not sure that I have any right to address to you the words I am about to write. The reason I have not visited you oftener and more earnestly is that I am offended by your pride, your sometime assumption of dignity, your manners which come over me like waves of Lethe. I know that if I stood in that relation to you which you seem to ask, I should not be met. Perhaps I am wiser than you think. Do you never for an instant treat me as a thing, flatter me? You treat me with politeness and I make myself scarce. We have not sympathy enough, do not always apprehend each other. You talk too, too often, as if I were Mr. Tompkins of the firm of ——, a retired merchant. If I had never thought of you as a friend, I could make much use of you as an acquaintance. . . .

The value of the pitch pine in winter is that

it holds the snow so finely. I see it now afar on the hillsides decking itself with it, its whited towers forming coverts where the rabbit and the gray squirrel lurk. It makes the most cheerful winter scenery, beheld from the window, you know so well the nature of the coverts and the sombre light it makes. The young oaks with their red leaves, covering so many acres, are also an indispensable feature of the winter landscape, and the limbs of oak woods where some of the trees have been cut off.

Jan. 31, 1854. P. M. To Great Meadows and Beck Stow's. The wind is more southerly, and now the warmth of the sun prevails and is felt on the back. The snow softens and melts. It is a beautiful, clear, and mild winter day. . . . But I do not melt. There is no thaw in me. I am bound out still. — I see the tree sparrows one or two at a time now and then all winter uttering a faint note, with their bright chestnut crown, and spot on breast, and barred wings. They represent the sparrows in winter. . . .

In winter when there are no flowers, and leaves are rare, even large buds are interesting and somewhat exciting. I go a budding like a partridge. I am always attracted at this season by the buds of the swamp pink, the poplars, and the sweet gale. . . .

We too have our thaws. They come to our

January moods, when our ice cracks, and our sluices break loose. Thought that was frozen up under stern experience gushes forth in feeling and expression. This is a freshet which carries away dams of accumulated ice. Our thoughts hide unexpressed like the buds under the downy or resinous scales. They would hardly keep a partridge from starving. If you would know what are my winter thoughts look in the partridge's crop. They are like the laurel buds, some leaf, some blossom buds, which, though food for such indigenous creatures, will not expand into leaves and flowers until summer comes.

Jan. 31, 1855. A clear, cool, beautiful day; fine skating; an unprecedented expanse of ice. At 10 A. M. skated up the river to explore farther than I had been. . . . The country almost completely bare of snow, only some ice in the roads and fields, and the frozen freshet at this remarkable height. I skated up as far as the boundary between Wayland and Sudbury, just above Pelham's Pond, about twelve miles, between 10 A. M. and 1, quite leisurely. There I found the river open unexpectedly, as if there were a rapid there, and as I walked three quarters of a mile farther, it was still open before me. . . . All the way I skated there was a chain of meadows, with the muskrat houses still

rising above the ice, commonly on the bank of the river, and marking it like smaller haycocks amid the large ones still left. — As I skated near the shore under Lee's Cliff, I saw what I took to be some scrags or knotty stubs of a dead limb, lying on the bank beneath a white oak, close by me. Yet while I looked closely at them, I could not but admire their close resemblance to partridges. I had come along with a rapid whir, and suddenly halted right against them, only two rods distant, and as my eyes watered a little from skating against the wind, I was not convinced they were birds, till I had pulled out my glass and deliberately examined them. They sat and stood, three of them, perfectly still, with their heads erect, some darker feathers, like ears methinks, increasing their resemblance to scrags, as where a small limb is broken off. I was much surprised at the remarkable stillness they preserved, instinctively relying on their resemblance to the ground for their protection, *i. e.*, withered grass, dry oak leaves, dead scrags, and broken twigs. . . . For some time after I had noted their resemblance to birds, standing only two rods off, I could not be sure of their character on account of their perfect motionlessness, and it was not till I brought my glass to bear on them, and distinctly saw their eyes steadily glaring on me and their

necks and every muscle tense with anxiety, that I was convinced. At length, on some signal which I did not perceive, they went with a whir, as if shot off, over the bushes.

Feb. 1, 1852. When I hear that a friend on whom I relied has spoken of me, not with cold words, perhaps, but even with a cold and indifferent tone, to another, ah! what treachery I feel it to be! the crime of all crimes against humanity. My friend may cherish a thousand suspicions against me, and they may but represent his faith and expectation, till he cherishes them so heartlessly that he can speak of them.

If I have not succeeded in my friendships, it was because I demanded more of them, and did not put up with what I could get; and I got no more, partly because I gave so little. I must be dumb to those who do not, as I believe, appreciate my actions, not knowing the springs of them.

While we preach obedience to human laws, and to that portion of the divine laws set forth in the New Testament, the natural laws of genius, of love and friendship, we do not preach nor insist upon. How many a seeming heartlessness is to be explained by the very abundance of the heart. How much of seeming recklessness, even selfishness, is to be explained by obedience to this code of the divine laws.

It is evident that as buyers and sellers we obey a very different law from what we do as lovers and friends. The Hindoo is not to be tried in all things by the Christian standard, nor the Christian by the Hindoo. How much fidelity to law of a kind not commonly recognized, how much magnanimity even may be thrown away on mankind, is like pearls cast before swine! The hero obeys his own law, the Christian, his, the lover and friend, theirs; they are to some extent different codes. What incessant tragedy between men when one silently obeys the code of friendship, the other, the code of philanthropy, in their dealings with one another. As our constitutions and geniuses are different, so are our standards, and we are amenable to different codes. My neighbor asks me in vain to be good as he is good. I must be good as I am made to be good, whether I am heathen or Christian. Every man's laws are hard enough to obey. The Christian falls as far short of obeying the heathen moral law as the heathen does. One of little faith looks for his rewards and punishments to the next world, and, despairing of this world, behaves accordingly in it; another thinks the present a worthy occasion and arena, sacrifices to it, and expects to hear sympathizing voices. The man who believes in another world and not in this is wont to put me

off with Christianity. The present world in which we talk is of a little less value to him than the next world. So we are said to hope in proportion as we do not realize. It is all hope deferred. But one grain of realization, of instant life on which we stand, is equivalent to acres of the leaf of hope hammered out to gild our prospect. The former so qualifies the vision that it gilds all we look upon with the splendor of truth. We must meet the hero on heroic grounds. Some tribes inhabit the mountains. Some dwell on the plains. We discourage one another. We obey different laws.

My friends! my friends! It does not cheer me to see them. They but express their want of faith in me or in mankind. Their coldest, cruellest thought comes clothed in polite and easy spoken words at last. I am silent to their invitations, because I do not *feel* invited, and we have no reasons to give for what we do *not* do. One says, "Love me out of this mire." The other says, "Come out of it and be lovely."

Feb. 1, 1855. As I skated up the river yesterday, now here, now there, past the old kingdoms of my fancy, I was reminded of Landor's Richard the First. "I sailed along the realms of my family; on the right was England, on the left was France [on the right was Sudbury, on the left was Wayland]; little else

could I discover than sterile eminences and extensive shoals. They fled behind me; so pass away generations; so shift and sink, and die away affections." "I debark in Sicily." [That was Tall's Island.] "I sail again, and within a day or two [hour or two] I behold, as the sun is setting, the solitary majesty of Crete [that was Nobscot surely], mother of a religion, it is said, that lived two thousand years. Onward, and many specks bubble up along the blue Ægean." These must have been the muskrat houses in the meadows. "Every one," I have no doubt, "the monument of a greater man [being ?] than I am." The swelling river was belching on a high key from ten to eleven, quite a musical cracking, running like chain lightning of sound athwart my course. . . . As I passed, the ice forced up by the water on one side suddenly settled on another with a crash, and quite a lake was formed above the ice behind me, so that my successor two hours after, to his wonder and alarm, saw my tracks disappear on one side of it and come out on the other. My seat from time to time is the springy horizontal bough of some fallen tree which is frozen into the ice, some old maple that was blown over and retained some life a year after, in the water, covered with the great shaggy perforate parmelia. Lying flat I quench my thirst where the ice is melted

about it, blowing aside the snow fleas. The great arundo in the Sudbury meadows was all level with the ice. There was a great bay of ice stretching up the Pantry, and up Larned Brook. I looked up a broad, glaring bay of ice at the last place which seemed to reach to the base of Nobscot and almost to the horizon. Some dead maple or oak saplings laid side by side made my bridges, by which I got on to the ice along the watery shore. It was a problem to get off, and another to get on, dry shod.

Feb. 1, 1857. 3 P. M. Down railroad. Thermometer at + 42°. Warm as it is, I see a large flock of snow buntings on the railroad causeway. Their wings are white above, next the body, but black or dark beyond, and on the back. This produces that regular black and white effect when they fly past you.

Feb. 1, 1858. Measured Gowing's swamp two and one half rods N. E. of the middle of the hole, *i. e.*, in the andromeda and sphagnum near its edge, where I stand in the summer; also five rods N. E. of the middle of the open hole, or in the midst of the andromeda. In both these places the pole went hard at first, but broke through a crust of roots and sphagnum at about three feet beneath the surface, and I then easily pushed it down just twenty feet. This being a small pole, I could not push

it any farther, holding it by the small end. It bent then. With a longer and stiffer pole, I could probably have fathomed thirty feet. It seems then that there is over this andromeda swamp a crust about three feet thick of sphagnum, andromeda (*calyculata* and *Polifolia*), and *Kalmia glauca*, beneath which there is almost clear water, and under that an exceedingly thin mud. There can be no soil above the mud, and yet there are three or four larch trees three feet high or more between these holes, or over exactly the same water, and small spruce trees near by. For aught that appears, the swamp is as deep under the andromedas as in the middle. The two andromedas and the *Kalmia glauca* may be more truly said to grow in water than in soil there. When the surface of a swamp shakes for a rod around you, you may conclude that it is a network of roots two or three feet thick resting on water or very thin mud. The surface of that swamp, composed in great part of sphagnum, is really floating. It evidently begins with sphagnum which floats on the surface of clear water, and accumulating, at length affords a basis for that large-seeded sedge(?), andromeda, etc. The filling up of a swamp then, in this case at least, is not the result of a deposition of vegetable matter washed into it, settling to the bottom, and leaving the surface clear, so filling it up from

the bottom to the top. But the vegetation first extends itself over it in a film which gradually thickens till it supports shrubs, and completely conceals the water. The under part of this crust drops to the bottom, so that it is filled up first at the top and bottom, and the middle part is the last to be reclaimed from the water. Perhaps this swamp is in the process of becoming peat. It has been partially drained by a ditch. — I fathomed also two rods within the edge of the blueberry bushes, in the path, but I could not force a pole down more than eight feet five inches, so it is much more solid there, and the blueberry bushes require a firmer soil than the water andromeda. — This is a regular *quag* or shaking surface, and in this way evidently floating islands are formed. I am not sure but that meadow, with all its bushes in it, would float a man-of-war.

Feb. 2, 1841. It is easy to repeat, but hard to originate. Nature is readily made to repeat herself in a thousand forms, and, in the daguerreotype, her own light is amanuensis. The picture, too, has more than a surface significance, a depth equal to the prospect, so that the microscope may be applied to the one, as the spyglass to the other. Thus we may easily multiply the forms of the outward, but to give the within outwardness, that is not easy.

That an impression may be taken, perfect stillness, though but for an instant, is necessary. There is something analogous in the birth of all rhymes.

Our sympathy is a gift whose value we can never know, nor when we impart it. The instant of communion is when, for the least point of time, we cease to oscillate and coincide in rest, by as fine a point as a star pierces the firmament. . . .

There is always a single ear in the audience to which we address ourselves.

How much does it concern you, the good opinion of your friend! Therein is the measure of fame. For the herd of men multiplied many times will never come up to the value of one friend. In this society there is no fame but love, for as our name may be on the lips of men, so are we in each other's hearts. There is no ambition but virtue, for why should we go round about who may go direct? . . .

For our aspirations there is no expression as yet, but if we obey steadily, by another year we shall have learned the language of last year's aspirations. . . .

Weight has something very imposing in it, for we cannot get rid of it. Once in the scales we must weigh. And are we not always in the scales, and weighing just our due, though we

kick the beam, and do all we can to make ourselves heavier or lighter?

Feb. 2, 1853. The *Stellaria media* [common chickweed] is full of frost-bitten blossoms containing stamens, etc., still, and half-grown buds. Apparently it never rests.

Feb. 2, 1854. Up river on ice to Clematis Brook. Another warm, melting day, like yesterday. You can see some softening and relenting in the sky. Apparently the vapor in the air makes a grosser atmosphere more like that of a summer eve. We go up the Corner road and take the ice at Potter's meadow. The Cliff Hill is nearly bare on the west side, and you hear the rush of melted snow down its side in one place. Here and there are regular round holes in the ice over the meadow two or three feet in diameter where the water appears to be warmer, and where are springs, perchance. Therein in shallow water is seen the cress and one or two other plants still quite fresh. The shade of pines on the snow is in some lights quite blue. We stopped a while under Bittern Cliff, the south side, where it is very warm. There are a few greenish radical leaves to be seen, primrose, Johnswort, strawberry, etc., and spleenwort still green in the clefts. These sunny old gray rocks completely covered with white and gray lichens, and overrun with ivy,

are a very cozy place. You hardly detect the melted snow swiftly trickling down them, until you feel the drops on your cheek. The winter gnat is seen in the air before the rocks. In their clefts are the latebræ of many insects, spiders, etc. . . .

The ice is eighteen inches thick on Fair Haven. Saw some pickerel just caught there with a fine lustre on them. — Went to the pond in the woods which has an old ditch dug from it near Clematis Brook. The red twigs of the cornel and the yellow ones of the sallows surrounding it are interesting at this season. We prize the least color now. As it is a melting day, the snow is everywhere peppered with snow fleas, even twenty rods from the woods, on the pond and meadows.

The scream of the jay is a true winter sound. It is wholly without sentiment, and in harmony with winter. — I stole up within five or six rods of a pitch pine behind which a downy woodpecker was pecking. From time to time he hopped round to the side towards me, and observed me without fear. They are very confident birds, not easily scared, but incline to keep the other side of the bough from you, perhaps.

Already we begin to anticipate spring, to say that the day is spring-like. This is an important difference between this time and a month ago.

Is not January the hardest month to get through? When you have weathered that, you get into the gulf stream of winter, nearer the shores of spring.

Feb. 2, 1855. . . . This last half inch of snow which fell in the night is just enough to track animals on the ice by. All about the Hill and Rock I see the tracks of rabbits which have run back and forth close to the shore repeatedly since the night. In the case of the rabbit, the fore feet are farther apart than the hind ones, the first, four or five inches to the stride, the last, two or three. They are generally not quite regular, but one of the fore feet a little in advance of the other, and so with the hind feet. There is an interval of about sixteen inches between each four tracks. Sometimes they are in a curve or crescent, all touching.

I saw what must have been a muskrat's or mink's track, I think, since it came out of the water; the tracks roundish, and toes much rayed four or five inches apart on the trail, with only a trifle more between the fore and hind legs, and the mark of the tail in successive curves as it struck the ice. — Another track puzzled me, as if a hare had been running like a dog (— · . — · . — · . eighteen inches apart), and touched its tail, if it had one. This in several places.

Feb. 2, 1858. . . . As I return from the post-office I hear the hoarse, robin-like chirp of a song sparrow, . . . and see him perched on the top-most twig of a heap of brush, looking forlorn, and drabbled, and solitary in the rain.

Feb. 2, 1860. 6° below at about 8 A. M. . . . 2 P. M. to Fair Haven Pond. The river, which was breaking up, is frozen over again. The new ice over the channel is of a yellow tinge, and is covered with handsome rosettes two or three inches in diameter where the vapor which rose through, froze and crystallized. This new ice for forty rods together is thickly covered with these rosettes, often as thick as snow, an inch deep. . . . The frozen breath of the river at a myriad breathing holes. . . .

It is remarkable that the straw-colored sedge of the meadows, which in the fall is one of the least noticeable colors, should now, that the landscape is mostly covered with snow, be perhaps the most noticeable of all objects in it for its color, and an agreeable contrast to the snow. . . .

I see where some meadow mouse (if not mole) just came to the surface of the snow, enough to break it with his back for three or four inches, then put his head out, and at once withdrew it.

We walked as usual on the fresh track of a

fox, peculiarly pointed, and sometimes the mark of two toe-nails in front separate from the track of the foot in very thin snow. As we were kindling a fire on the pond by the side of the island, we saw the fox himself at the inlet of the river. He was busily examining along the sides of the pond by the button-bushes and willows, smelling in the snow. Not appearing to regard us much, he slowly explored along the shore of the pond thus half way round it; at Pleasant Meadow evidently looking for mice (or moles?) in the grass of the bank, smelling in the shallow snow there, amid the stubble, often retracing his steps, and pausing at particular spots. He was eagerly searching for food, intent on finding some mouse to help fill his empty stomach. He had a blackish tail and blackish feet, looked lean, and stood high. The tail peculiarly large for any creature to carry round. He stepped daintily about, softly, and is more to the manor born than a dog. It was a very arctic scene this cold day, and I suppose he would hardly have ventured out in a warm one. — The fox seems to get his living by industry and perseverance. He runs smelling for miles along the most favorable routes, especially the edge of rivers and ponds, till he smells the track of a mouse beneath the snow, or the fresh track of a partridge, and then follows it till he comes

upon his game. . . . There may be a dozen partridges resting in the snow within a square mile, and his work is simply to find them with the end of his nose. Compared with the dog he affects me as high-bred, unmixed. There is nothing of the mongrel in him. He belongs to a noble family which has seen its best days, a younger son. Now and then he starts, and turns, and doubles on his track, as if he heard or scented danger. (I watch him through my glass.) He does not mind us at the distance of only sixty rods. I have myself seen to-day one place where a mouse came to the surface in the snow. Probably he has smelled out many such galleries. Perhaps he seizes them through the snow. — I had a transient vision of one mouse this winter, and that the first for a number of years.

Feb. 3, 1841. The present seems never to get its due. It is the least obvious, neither before nor behind, but within us. All the past plays into this moment, and we are what we are. My aspiration is one thing, my reflection, another; but, over all, myself and condition — is and does. To men and nature I am each moment a finished tool, — a spade, a barrow, a pickaxe. This immense promise is no *efficient* quality. For all practical purposes I am done. . . .

We are constantly invited to be what we are,

as to something worthy and noble. I never waited but for myself to come round; none ever detained me, but I lagged or staggered after myself.

It steads us to be as true to children and boors, as to God himself. It is the only attitude which will meet all occasions. It only will make the earth yield her increase, — and by it do we effectually expostulate with the wind. If I run against a post, this is the remedy.

I would meet the morning and evening on very sincere ground. When the sun introduces me to a new day, I silently say to myself, "Let us be faithful all round. We will do justice and receive it." Something like this is the secret charm of Nature's demeanor towards us, strict conscientiousness, and disregard of us when we have ceased to have regard for ourselves. So she can never offend us. How true she is, and never swerves. In her most genial moment, her laws are as steadfastly and relentlessly fulfilled (though the decalogue is rhymed and set to sweetest music), as in her sternest.

Any exhibition of affection, as an inadvertent word, or act, or look, seems premature, as if the time were not ripe for it, like the buds which the warm days near the end of winter cause to push out and unfold before the frosts are yet gone.

My life must seem as if it were passing on a higher level than that which I occupy. It must possess a dignity which will not allow me to be familiar.

Feb. 3, 1852. When I review the list of my acquaintances from the most impartial point of view, and consider each one's excesses and defects of character which are the subject of mutual ridicule and astonishment and pity (and I class myself among them), I cannot help asking myself, "If this is the sane world, what must a mad-house be?" It is only by a certain flattery, and an ignoring of their faults, that even the best are made available for society.

I have been to the libraries (yesterday) at Cambridge and Boston. It would seem as if all things compelled us to originality. How happens it that I find not in the country, in the fields and woods, the works even of like-minded naturalists and poets. Those who have expressed the purest and deepest love of nature have not recorded it on the bark of the trees with the lichens, they have left no memento of it there; but if I would read their books, I must go to the city, so strange and repulsive both to them and to me, and deal with men and institutions with whom I have no sympathy. When I have just been there on this errand, it seems too great a price to pay even for access to the works

of Homer or Chaucer or Linnæus. Greece and Asia Minor should henceforth bear Iliads and Odysseys, as their trees lichens. But, no; if the works of nature are, to any extent, collected in the forest, the works of men are, to a still greater extent, collected in the city. I have sometimes imagined a library, *i. e.*, a collection of the works of true poets, philosophers, naturalists, etc., deposited not in a brick or marble edifice in a crowded and dusty city, guarded by cold-blooded and methodical officials, and preyed on by bookworms, in which you own no share, and are not likely to, but rather far away in the depths of a primitive forest, like the ruins of Central America, where you could trace a series of crumbling alcoves, the older books protecting the more modern from the elements, partially buried by the luxuriance of nature, which the heroic student could only reach after adventures in the wilderness amid wild beasts and wild men. That, to my imagination, seems a fitter place for these interesting relics which owe no small part of their interest to their antiquity, and whose occasion is nature, than the well-preserved edifice, with its well-preserved officials, on the side of a city's square. More terrible than lions and tigers, these Cerberuses. Access to nature for original observation is secured by one ticket, by one kind of expense; but access to the

works of your predecessors, by a very different kind of expense. All things tend to cherish the originality of the original. Nature, at least, takes no pains to introduce him to the works of his predecessors, but only presents him with her own *opera omnia*. Is it the lover of nature who has access to all that has been written on the subject of his favorite studies? No; he lives far away from this. It is the lover of books and systems who knows nature chiefly at second hand. . . .

About 6 P. M. walked to Cliffs *via* railroad. Snow quite deep. The sun had set without a cloud in the sky; a rare occurrence, but I missed the clouds which make the glory of evening. The sky must have a few clouds, as the mind a few moods; nor is the evening less serene for them. There is only a tinge of red along the horizon. The moon is nearly full to-night, and the moment is passed when the light in the east (*i. e.*, of the moon) balances the light in the west. . . . It is perfectly still, and not very cold. The shadows of the trees on the snow are more minutely distinct than at any other season, not dark masses merely, but finely reticulated, each limb and twig represented, as cannot be in summer both from the leaves and the inequality and darkness of the ground. . . . I hear my old acquaintance, the owl, from the causeway. The reflector of

the cars, as I stand over the Deep Cut, makes a large and dazzling light in this air, . . . and now whizzes the boiling, sizzling kettle by me, in which the passengers make me think of potatoes which a fork would show to be done by this time. The steam is denser for the cold, and more white; like the purest downy clouds in the summer sky its volumes roll up between me and the moon, and far behind, when the cars are a mile off, it still goes shading the fields with its wreaths, the breath of the panting traveler. I now cross from the railroad to the road. This snow, the last of which fell day before yesterday, is two feet deep, pure and powdery. . . . From a myriad little crystal mirrors the moon is reflected, which is the untarnished sparkle of its surface. I hear a gentle rustling of the oak leaves as I go through the woods, but this snow has yet no troops of leaves on its surface The snow evidently by its smooth crust assists in the more equal dispersion and distribution of the leaves which course over it, blown by the wind. Perchance, for this reason, the oak leaves and some others hang on. . . .

[On Fair Haven Hill.] Instead of the sound of his [the chopper's] axe, I hear the hooting of an owl, *nocturnus ululatus*, whose haunts he is laying waste. The ground is all pure white, powdery snow, which his sled, etc., has stirred

up, except the scattered twigs and pine plumes. I can see every track distinctly where the teamster drove his oxen and loaded his sled, and even the tracks of his dog, in the moonlight, and plainly to write this. — The moonlight now is very splendid in the untouched pine woods above the Cliffs, alternate patches of shade and light. The light has almost the brightness of sunlight, the fulgor. The stems of the trees are more obvious than by day, being simple black against the moonlight and the snow. The sough of the breeze in the pine tops sounds far away like the surf on a distant shore, and for all sound beside, there is only the rattling or chafing of little dry twigs, perchance a little snow falling on them, or they are so brittle that they break and fall with the motion of the trees. — My owl sounds hoo-hoo-hoo — hoo.

The landscape covered with snow seen from these Cliffs, encased in snowy armor two feet thick, gleaming in the moonlight and of spotless white, who can believe that this is the habitable globe. The scenery is wholly arctic. Fair Haven Pond is a Baffin's Bay. Man must have ascertained the limits of the winter before he ventured to withstand it, and not migrate with the birds. No cultivated field, no house, no candle. All is as dreary as the shores of the frozen ocean. I can tell where there is wood

and where open land for many miles in the horizon by the darkness of the former and whiteness of the latter. . . . It looks as if the snow and ice of the arctic world, traveling like a glacier, had crept down southward and overwhelmed New England. See if a man can think his summer thoughts now. — But the evening star is preparing to set, and I will return, floundering through snow, sometimes up to my middle. . . .

The forcible writer stands bodily behind his words with his experience. He does not make books out of books, but he has been *there* in person. . . .

That is a good mythological incident told of the wounded farmer who, his foot being lacerated and held fast between his plow and a fallen tree in a forest clearing, drew his oxen to him with difficulty, smeared their horns with blood which the mosquitoes had drawn from his bare arms, and cutting the reins, sent them home as an advertisement to his family.

Feb. 3, 1854. . . . Varro speaks of two kinds of pigeons, one of which was wont to alight on the (*Columinibus villæ*) columns of a villa (*a quo appellatæ columbæ*), from which they were called "*Columbæ.*" These, on account of their natural timidity (*summa loca in tectis captant*), delight in the highest places on the roofs (or under cover)?

Feb. 3, 1855. . . . Skated up the river with T——n in spite of the snow and wind. . . . We went up the Pantry meadow . . . and came down . . . again with the wind and snow dust, spreading our coat tails, like birds, though somewhat at the risk of our necks, if we had struck a foul place. I found that I could sail on a tack pretty well, trimming with my skirts. Sometimes we had to jump suddenly over some obstacle, which the snow had concealed, to save our necks. It was worth the while for one to look back against the sun and wind, and see the other sixty rods off, . . . floating down like a graceful demon in the midst of the broad meadow, all covered and lit with the curling snow steam, between which you saw the ice in dark, waving streaks, like a mighty river Orellana braided of a myriad steaming currents; like the demon of the storm driving his flocks and herds before him. In the midst of this tide of curling snow steam, he sweeps and surges this way and that, and comes on like the spirit of the whirlwind. At Lee's Cliff we made a fire, kindling with white pine cones, after oak leaves and twigs, else we had lost it. The cones saved us, for there is a resinous drop at the point of each scale. There we forgot that we were out doors in a blustering winter day. Flash go your dry leaves like powder, and leave a few

bare and smoking twigs. Then you sedulously feed a little flame until the fire takes hold of the solid wood and establishes itself. What an uncertain and negative thing is fire when it finds nothing to suit its appetite after the first flash. What a positive and inexpugnable thing, when it begins to devour the solid wood with a relish, burning with its own wind. You must think as long at last how to put it out as you did how to kindle it. Close up under some upright rock where you scorch the yellow sulphur lichens. Then cast on some creeping juniper wreaths or hemlock boughs to hear them crackle, realizing scripture.

Some little boys ten years old are as handsome skaters as I know. They sweep along with a graceful, floating motion, leaning now to this side, then to that, like a marsh hawk beating the bush. . . .

I still recur in my mind to that skating tour of the 31st. I was thus enabled to get a bird's-eye view of the river, to survey its length and breadth within a few hours, connect one part or shore with another in my mind, and realize what was going on upon it from end to end, to know the whole, as I ordinarily knew a few miles of it only. I connected the chestnut-tree house near the shore in Wayland with the chimney house in Billerica, Pelham's Pond with

Nutting's Pond in Billerica. There is good skating from the mouth to Saxonville, measureing in a straight line some twenty-two miles, by the river say thirty now. It is all the way of one character, a meadow river, or dead stream. Musketicook, the abode of muskrats, pickerel, etc., crossed within these dozen miles each way, or thirty in all, by some twenty low wooden bridges, *sublicii pontes*, connected with the mainland by willowy causeways. Thus the long shallow lakes are divided into reaches. These long causeways all under water and ice now, only the bridges peeping out from time to time, like a dry eyelid. You must look close to find them in many cases, mere islands are they to the traveler in this waste of water and ice. Only two villages lying near the river, Concord and Wayland, and one at each end of this thirty miles. . . . I used some bits of wood with a groove in them for crossing the causeways and gravelly places, that I might not scratch my skate irons.

Feb. 3, 1856. . . . P. M. Up North Branch. A strong N. W. wind (and thermometer 11°) driving the snow like steam. About five inches of soft snow now on ice. . . . Returning, saw near the Island a shrike glide by, cold and blustering as it was, with a remarkably even and steady sail or gliding motion, like a hawk, eight

or ten feet above the ground, and alight on a tree from which, at the same instant, a small bird, perhaps a creeper or nuthatch, flitted timidly away. The shrike was apparently in pursuit.

We go wading through snow now up the bleak river, in the face of a cutting N. W. wind and driving snow-storm, turning now this ear, now that, to the wind, our gloved hands in our bosoms or our pockets. How different this from sailing or paddling up the stream here in July, or poling amid the rocks! Yet still, in one square rod where they have got out ice and a thin transparent covering has formed, I can see the pebbly bottom as in summer.

There comes a deep snow in midwinter covering up the ordinary food of many birds and quadrupeds, but anon a high wind scatters the seeds of pines, hemlocks, birches, alders, etc., far and wide over the surface of the snow, for them.

You may now observe plainly the habit of the rabbits to run in paths about the swamps.

Mr. Emerson, who returned last week from lecturing, on the Mississippi, having been gone but a month, tells me that he saw boys skating on the Mississippi, and on Lake Erie, and on the Hudson, and has no doubt they are skating on Lake Superior. Probably at Boston he might have seen them skating on the Atlantic.

In Barber's "Historical Collections," p. 476, there is a letter by Cotton Mather dated "Boston, 10th Dec., 1717," describing the great snow of the preceding February, from which I quote: "On the twentieth of the last February there came on a snow, which being added unto what had covered the ground a few days before, made a thicker mantle for our mother than what was usual. And the storm with it was, for the following day, so violent as to make all communication between the neighbors everywhere to cease. People, for some hours, could not pass from one side of a street to another."

"On the twenty-fourth day of the month came Pelion upon Ossa. Another snow came on, which almost buried the memory of the former, with a storm so famous that Heaven laid an interdict on the religious assemblies throughout the country on the Lord's day, the like whereunto had never been seen before. The Indians near an hundred years old affirm that their fathers never told them of anything that equaled it. Vast numbers of cattle were destroyed in this calamity, whereof some there were of the stranger [stronger?] sort, were found standing dead on their legs, as if they had been alive, many weeks after when the snow melted away. And others had their eyes glazed over with ice at such a rate, that being

not far from the sea, their mistake of their way drowned them there. One gentleman on whose farms were lost above eleven hundred sheep, which with other cattle, were interred (shall I say) or innived in the snow, writes me word that there were two sheep very singularly circumstanced. For, no less than eight and twenty days after the storm, the people pulling out the ruins of above an hundred sheep out of a snow bank which lay sixteen foot high drifted over them, there was two found alive which had been there all this time, and kept themselves alive by eating the wool of their dead companions. When they were taken out, they shed their own fleeces, but soon got into good case again."

"A man had a couple of young hogs which he gave over for dead, but on the twenty-seventh day after their burial, they made their way out of a snow bank, at the bottom of which they had found a little tansy to feed upon." "Hens were found alive after seven days; turkeys were found alive after five and twenty days, buried in the snow, and at a distance from the ground, and altogether destitute of anything to feed them." — "The wild creatures of the woods, [at] the outgoing of the evening, made their descent as well as they could in this time of scarcity for them, towards the sea-side. A vast multitude of deer, for the same cause, taking

the same course, and the deep snow spoiling them of their only defense, which is to run, they became such a prey to these devourers that it is thought not one in twenty escaped." — "It is incredible how much damage is done to the orchards, for the snow freezing to a crust as high as the bows of the trees, anon split them to pieces. The cattle, also, walking on the crusted snow a dozen feet from the ground, so fed upon the trees as very much to damnify them." "Cottages were totally covered with the snow, and not the very tops of their chimneys to be seen." These "odd accidents," he says, "would afford a story. But there not being any relation to Philosophy in them, I forbear them." He little thought that his simple testimony to such facts as the above would be worth all the philosophy he might dream of.

Feb. 3, 1857. To Fitchburg to lecture. — Though the snow was not deep, I noticed that an unbroken snow crust stretched around Fitchburg; and its several thousand inhabitants had been confined so long to the narrow streets, some of them a track only six feet wide. Hardly one individual had anywhere departed from this narrow walk, and struck out into the surrounding fields and hills. If I had had my cowhide boots, I should not have confined myself to those narrow limits, but have climbed some of the hills.

It is surprising to go into a N. E. town in mid-winter and find its five thousand inhabitants all living thus on the limits, confined at most to their narrow moose-yard in the snow. Scarcely here and there has a citizen stepped aside one foot to let a sled pass. And about as circumscribed is their summer life, going out from house to shop, and back to house again. If, Indian-like, one examined the dew or beaded grass, he would be surprised to discover how little trodden or frequented the surrounding fields were. . . . It is as if some vigilance committee had given notice that if any should transgress these narrow limits, he should be outlawed and his blood should be upon his own head.

Feb. 3, 1858. . . . I do not see this year, and I do not know that I ever have seen, any unseasonable swelling of the buds of *indigenous* plants in mild winters.

Feb. 3, 1859. Five minutes before 3 P. M. father died. . . . I have touched a body which was flexible and warm, yet tenantless — warmed by what fire? When the spirit that animated some matter has left it, who else, what else, can animate it?

How enduring are our bodies after all! The forms of our brothers and sisters, our parents and children and wives, lie still in the hills and fields round about us, not to mention those of

our remoter ancestors, and the matter which composed the body of our first human father still exists under another name.

When in sickness the body is emaciated, and the expression of the face in various ways is changed, you perceive unexpected resemblances to other members of the same family, as if within the same family there was a greater general similarity in the framework of the face than in its filling up and clothing. . . .

Some have spoken slightingly of the Indians, as a race possessing so little skill and wit, so low in the scale of humanity, and so brutish that they hardly deserved to be remembered, using only the terms, miserable, wretched, pitiful, and the like. In writing their histories of this country, they have so hastily disposed of this refuse of humanity (as they might have called it), which littered and defiled the shore and the interior. But even the indigenous animals are inexhaustibly interesting to us. How much more then the indigenous men of America! If wild men, so much more like ourselves than they are unlike, have inhabited these shores before us, we wish to know particularly what manner of men they were, how they lived here, their relation to nature, their arts and their customs, their fancies and superstitions. They paddled over these waters, they wandered in

these woods, and they had their fancies and beliefs connected with the sea and the forest, which concern us quite as much as the fables of Oriental nations do. It frequently happens that the historian, though he professes more humanity than the trapper, the mountain man, or gold digger, who shoots one as a wild beast, in reality exhibits and practices a similar inhumanity to his, wielding a pen instead of a rifle. — One tells you with more contempt than pity that the Indian has no religion, holding up both hands, and this to all the shallow-brained and bigoted seems to mean something important. But it is a distinction without a difference. Pray how much more religion has the historian? If —— knows so much more about God than another, if he has made some discovery of truth in this direction, I would thank him to publish it in "Silliman's Journal," with as few flourishes as possible. It is the spirit of humanity, that which animates both so-called savages and civilized nations, working through a man, and not the man expressing himself, that interests us most. The thought of a so-called savage tribe is generally far more just than that of a single civilized man.

I perceive that we partially die ourselves, through sympathy, at the death of each of our friends or near relatives. Each such experience

is an assault on our vital force. It becomes a source of wonder that they who have lost many friends still live. After long watching around the sick-bed of a friend, we too partially give up the ghost with him, and are the less to be iden tified with this state of things.

The writer must, to some extent, inspire himself. Most of the sentences may at first be dead in his essay, but when all are arranged, some life and color will be reflected on them from the mature and successful lines. They will appear to pulsate with past life, and he will be enabled to eke out their slumbering sense, and make them worthy of their neighborhood. In his first essay on a given theme, he produces scarcely more than a frame and ground-work for his sentiment and poetry. Each clear thought that he attains to, draws in its train many kindred thoughts or perceptions. The writer has much to do even to create a theme for himself. Most that is first written on any subject is a mere groping after it, mere rubble-stone and foundation. It is only when many observations of different periods have been brought together that he begins to grasp his subject, and can make one pertinent and just observation.

Feb. 3, 1860. . . . When I read some of the rules for speaking and writing the English language correctly, as that a sentence must never

end with a particle, and perceive how implicitly even the learned obey it, I think

> Any fool can make a rule,
> And every fool will mind it.

Feb. 4, 1841. . . . Music can make the most nervous chord vibrate healthily. . . .

Wait till you can be genuinely polite, though it be till doomsday, and not lose your chance everlastingly by a cowardly yielding to young etiquette. . . .

Not only by his cunning hand and brain, but when he speaks, too, does man assert his superiority. He conquers the spaces with his voice as well as the lion. The voice of a strong man modulated to the cadence of some tune is more imposing than any natural sound. The keeper's is the most commanding voice in the menagerie, and is heard over all its din. A strong, musical voice imposes a new order and harmony upon nature. From it as a centre, a law is promulgated to the universe. What it lacks in volume and loudness may always be made up in musical expression and distinctness. The brute growls to secure obedience, he threatens; the man speaks as if obedience were already secured.

Feb. 4, 1852. A mild, thawy day. The needles of the pine are the touchstone for the air. Any change in that element is revealed to the practiced eye by their livelier green or increased

motion. They are the tell-tales. Now they are (the white pine) a cadaverous, misty blue, anon a lively . . . light plays on them, and they seem to erect themselves unusually, while the pitch pines are a brighter yellowish green than usual. The sun loves to nestle in the boughs of the pine and pass rays through them. — The scent of bruised pine leaves where a sled has passed is a little exciting to me now.

I saw this afternoon such lively, blood-red colors on a white pine stump recently cut, that at first I thought the chopper had cut himself. The heart of the tree was partly decayed, and here and there the sounder parts were of this vermilion (?) color alternating with the ordinary white of the wood where it was apparently in the earlier stages of decay. The color was livelier for being wet with the melting snow.

Feb. 4, 1854. . . . We have not much that is poetic in the accompaniments of the farmer's life. Varro speaks of the swineherd as accustoming the swine or boars to come at the sound of a horn when he fed them with acorns. I remember that my grandmother used to call her cow home at evening from a near pasture to be milked by thumping on the mortar which held her salt. The tinkling cow-bell cannot be spared. Even what most attracts us in the farmer's life is not its profitableness. We love to go after the

cow not for the sake of her milk or her beef, or the money they yield, but perchance to hear the tinkling of the cow-bell. . . . We would keep hens not for eggs, but to hear the cocks crow and the hens cackle.

As for the locality of bee-hives, Varro says they must be placed near the villa, "potissimum ubi non resonent imagines, hic enim sonus harum fugæ causa existimatur esse," especially where there are no echoes, "for this sound is thought to be the cause of their flight."

Feb. 4, 1855. . . . Saw this P. M. a very distinct otter track by the Rock, at the junction of the two rivers. The separate foot tracks were quite round, more than two inches in diameter, showing the five toes distinctly in the snow, which was about half an inch deep. In one place where it had crossed last night to Merrick's pasture, its trail about six inches wide and of furrows in the snow was on one side of its foot tracks, and there were about nine inches between its fore and hind feet. Close by the great aspen I saw where it had entered or come out of the water under a shelf of ice left adhering to a maple. There it apparently played or slid on the level ice, making a broad trail, as if a shovel had been shoved along, just eight inches wide, without a foot track in it for four feet or more. And again the trail was only two inches wide and

between the foot tracks, which were side by side and twenty-two inches apart. . . . About the edge of the hole, where the snow was all rubbed off, was something white which looked and smelt exactly like bits of the skin of pouts or eels. Minott tells of one shot once while eating an eel. Vance saw one this winter in this town eating fish by a brook. . . .

Feb. 4, 1857. I sometimes hear a prominent, but dull-witted worthy man say, or hear that he has said rarely, that if it were not for his firm belief in "an overruling power," or "a perfect Being," etc. But such poverty-stricken expressions only convince me of his habitual doubt, and that he is surprised into a transient belief. Such a man's expression of faith, moving solemnly in the traditional furrow, and casting out all free-thinking and living souls with the rusty mould-board of his compassion or contempt, thinking that he has Moses and all the prophets in his wake, discourages and saddens me as an expression of his narrow and barren want of faith. I see that the infidels and skeptics have formed themselves into churches, and weekly gather together at the ringing of a bell. Sometimes when in conversation or a lecture, I have been grasping at, or even standing and reclining upon the serene and everlasting truths that underlie and support our vacillating life, I have seen

my auditors standing on their terra firma, the quaking earth, crowded together on their Lisbon Quay, and compassionately or timidly watching my motions as if they were the antics of a rope-dancer or mountebank pretending to walk on air.

Feb. 4, 1858. P. M. To C. Miles swamp. Discover the *Ledum latifolium* quite abundant on a space about six rods in diameter just E. of the small pond-hole, growing with the *Andromeda calyculata*, [*A.*] *Polifolia*, *Kalmia glauca*, etc. . . . The ledum bears a general resemblance to the water andromeda, with its dark-reddish, purplish, or rather mulberry leaves, reflexed; but nearer, it is distinguished by its coarseness, the perfect tent form of its upper leaves, and the large, conspicuous, terminal, roundish (strictly oval) red buds, nearly as big as the swamp pink's, but rounded. The woolly stem for a couple of inches beneath the bud is frequently bare, and conspicuously club-shaped. The rust on the under sides of the leaves is of a lighter color than that of Maine. The seed vessels, which open at the base first, still hold on. The plant might be easily confounded with the water andromeda by a careless observer. . . .

I brought some home, and had a cup of tea made of it, which, in spite of a slight piny or turpentine flavor, seemed unexpectedly good. . . . As usual with the finding of new plants, I had a

presentiment that I should find the ledum in Concord. It is a remarkable fact that in the case of the most interesting plants which I have discovered in this vicinity, I have anticipated finding them perhaps a year before the discovery.

Feb. 5, 1841. . . . Music is the crystallization of sound. There is something in the effect of a harmonious voice upon the disposition of its neighborhood analogous to the law of crystals. It centralizes itself, and sounds like the published law of things. If the law of the universe were to be audibly promulgated, no mortal lawgiver would suspect it, for it would be a finer melody than his ears ever attended to. It would be sphere music. . . .

In all emergencies there is always one step which you may take on firm ground, where gravity will assure your footing. So you hold a draft on Fate payable at sight.

Feb. 5, 1852. . . . Men do believe in symbols yet and can understand some. When Sir Francis Head left his government in Upper Canada, and the usual farewell had been said, as the vessel moved off, he, standing on the deck, pointed, for all reply, to the British flag floating over his head, and a shriek rather than a cheer went up from the crowd on the piers who had observed his gesture. . . .

Time never passes so rapidly and unaccountably as when I am engaged in recording my thoughts. The world may perchance reach its end for us in a profounder thought, and time itself run down.

Feb. 5, 1853. . . . The frost is out of the ground in many places. A *Stellaria media* [common chickweed] in blossom in the garden, as was the case, of course, last month.

Feb. 5, 1854. . . . Shall we not have sympathy with the muskrat, which gnaws its third leg off, not as pitying its suffering, but through our kindred mortality, appreciating its majestic pains and its heroic virtue? Are we not made its brothers by fate? For whom are psalms sung and mass said, if not for such worthies as these? When I hear the church organ peal, or feel the trembling tones of the bass-viol, I see in imagination the muskrat gnawing off his leg. I offer up a note that his affliction may be sanctified to each and all of us. . . . When I think of the tragedies which are constantly permitted in the course of all animal life, they make the plaintive strain of the universal harp which elevates us above the trivial. . . . Even as the worthies of mankind are said to recommend human life by having lived it, so I could not spare the example of the muskrat.

Feb. 5, 1859. When we have experienced

many disappointments, such as the loss of friends, the notes of birds cease to affect us as they did.

Feb. 6, 1841. One may discover a new side to his most intimate friend when for the first time he hears him speak in public. He will be strange to him as he is more familiar to the audience. The longest intimacy could not foretell how he would behave then. When I observe my friend's conduct toward others, then chiefly I learn the traits in his character, and in each case I am unprepared for the issue. . . . How little do we know each other. Who can tell how his friend would behave on any occasion. . . .

What I am must make you forget what I wear. The fashionable world is content to be eclipsed by its dress, and never will bear the contrast. . . .

Lu ral lu ral lu — may be more impressively sung than very respectable wisdom talked. It is well timed, as wisdom is not always.

Feb. 6, 1852. . . . The artificial system has been very properly called the dictionary, and the natural method, the grammar of the science of botany, by botanists themselves. But are we to have nothing but grammars and dictionaries of this literature? Are there no works written in the language of flowers? I asked a learned and accurate naturalist, who is at the same time the courteous guardian of a public library, to

direct me to those works which contained the more . . . popular account or biography of particular flowers from which the botanies I had met with appeared to draw sparingly, for I trusted that each flower had had many lovers and faithful describers in past times. But he informed me that I had read all, that no one was acquainted with them, they were only catalogued like his books. . . .

Who will not confess that the necessity to get money has helped to ripen some of his schemes?

Feb. 6, 1853. Observed some buds on a young apple-tree partially unfolded at the extremity and apparently swollen. Probably blossom buds.

Feb. 6, 1855. The coldest morning this winter. Our thermometer stands at —14° at 9 A. M. Others, we hear, at 6 A. M. stood at —18°. There are no loiterers in the street, and the wheels of wagons squeak as they have not for a long time, actually shriek. Frostwork keeps its place on the window within three feet of the stove all day in my chamber. At 4 P. M., the thermometer is at —10°. At six it is at —14°. I was walking at five, and found it stinging cold. . . . When I look out at the chimneys, I see that the cold and hungry air snaps up the smoke at once. The smoke is clear and light colored, and does not get far into the air before it is dissipated(?), condensed. The setting sun no

sooner leaves our west windows than a solid, but beautiful crystallization coats them, except, it may be, a triangularish bare spot at one corner which, perhaps, the sun has warmed and dried. . . . A solid, sparkling field in the midst of each pane, with broad, flowing sheaves surrounding it. It has been a very mild as well as open winter up to this. At 9 o'clock P. M., thermometer at —16°. They say it did not rise above —6° to-day.

Feb. 7, 1855. The coldest night for a long, long time. Sheets froze stiff about the face. . . . People dreaded to go to bed. The ground cracked in the night as if a powder-mill had blown up, and the timbers of the house also. My pail of water was frozen in the morning so that I could not break it. . . . Iron was like fire in the hands. [Mercury ?] at about 7.30 A. M. gone into the bulb of the thermometer —19° at least. . . . Bread, meat, milk, cheese, etc., all frozen. . . . The inside of your cellar door all covered and sparkling with frost like Golconda. The latches are white with frost, and every nail-head in entries, etc., has a white head. . . . Neighbor Smith's thermometer stood at —26° early this morning. But the day is at length more moderate than yesterday. . . . This will be remembered as the cold Tuesday. The old folks still refer to the cold Friday, when they

sat before great fires of wood four feet long, with a fence of blankets behind them, and water froze on the mantel-piece.

Feb. 7, 1838. Zeno, the Stoic, stood in precisely the same relation to the world that I do now. He is forsooth bred a merchant, as how many still, and can trade, and barter, and perhaps higgle, and moreover he can be shipwrecked and cast ashore at the Piræus, like one of your Johns or Thomases. He strolls into a shop, and is charmed by a book, by Xenophon, and straightway he becomes a philosopher. The sun of a new life's day rises to him serene and unclouded, which looks over στοὰ. And still the fleshly Zeno sails on, shipwrecked, buffeted, tempest-tossed, but the true Zeno sails over a placid sea. Play high, play low, rain, sleet, or snow, it 's all the same with the stoic. . . . When evening comes, he sits down unwearied to the review of his day, what 's done that 's to be undone, what not done at all still to be done; himself Truth's unconcerned helpmate. Another system of book-keeping this, then, that the Cyprian trader to Phœnicia practiced.

This was he who said to a certain garrulous young man, "On this account have we two ears and but one mouth, that we may hear more, and speak less." . . . The wisest may apologize that he only said so to hear himself talk, for if he

heard not, as well for him had he never spoken. What is all this gabble to the gabbler? Only the silent reap the profit of it.

Feb. 7, 1841. . . . There would be a new year's gift, indeed, if we would bestow on each other our sincerity. We should communicate our wealth, and not purchase that which does not belong to us, for a sign. Why give each other a sign to keep? If we gave the thing itself, there would be no need of a sign. . . .

The eaves are running on the south side of the house, the titmouse lisps in the poplar, the bells are ringing for church, while the sun presides over all and makes his simple warmth more obvious than all else. What shall I do with the hour so like time and yet so fit for eternity? Where in me are these russet patches of ground, and scattered logs and chips in the yard? I do not feel cluttered. — I have some notion what the Johnswort and life-everlasting may be thinking about when the sun shines on me as on them, and turns my prompt thought into just such a seething shimmer. I lie out as indistinct as a heath at noonday. I am evaporating and ascending into the sun. . . .

The most I can do for my friend is simply to be his friend. I have no wealth to bestow on him. If he knows that I am happy in loving him, he will want no other reward. Is not Friendship divine in this?

I have myself to respect, but to myself I am not amiable; but my friend is my amiableness personified. . . .

The world has never learned what men can build each other up to be, when both master and pupil work in love. . . .

Wait not till I invite thee, but observe that I am glad to see thee when thou comest.

The most ardent lover holds yet a private court, and his love can never be so strong and ethereal that there will not be danger that judgment be rendered against the beloved. . . .

So far as we respond to our ideal estimate of each other, do we have profitable intercourse.

Feb. 7, 1857. Hayden, the elder, tells me that the quails have come to his yard every day for about a month, and are just as tame as chickens. They come about his wood shed, he supposes, to pick up the worms that have dropped out of the wood, and when it storms hard, gather together in a corner of the shed. He walks within about three or four feet of them without disturbing them. . . . They will be about his yard the greater part of the day; were there yesterday, though it was so warm, but now probably can get food enough elsewhere. They go just the same to Poland's across the road. About ten years ago there was a bevy of fifteen that used to come from the same woods, and one

day they being in the barn and scared by the cat, four ran into the hay and died there. . . . Thus it seems in severe winters the quails venture out of the woods, and join the poultry of the farmer's yard, if it be near the edge of the wood. It is remarkable that this bird, which thus half domesticates itself, should not be found wholly domesticated before this.

Feb. 7, 1858. . . . If possible, come upon the top of a hill unexpectedly, perhaps through woods, and then look off from it to the distant earth which lies behind a bluer veil, before you can see directly down it, *i. e.*, bringing its own near top against the distant landscape.

Feb. 7, 1859. Evidently the distant woods are more blue in a warm and moist or misty day in winter, and is not this connected with the blue in snow in similar days?

Going along the Nut Meadow on Jimmy Miles's road, when I see the sulphur lichens on the rails, brightening with the moisture, I feel like studying them again as a relisher and tonic, to make life go down and digest well, as we use pepper and vinegar and salads. They are a sort of winter green which we gather and assimilate with our eyes. That 's the true use of the study of lichens. I expect thus the lichenist will have the keenest relish for Nature in her every-day mood and dress. He will have the appetite of the worm that never dies, of the grub. To

study lichens is to get a taste of earth and health, to go gnawing the rails and rocks. This product of the bark is the essence of all tonics. The lichenist extracts nutriment from the very crust of the earth. A taste for this study is an evidence of titanic health, a rare earthiness. It makes not so much blood as soil of life. It fits a man to deal with the barrenest and rockiest experience. A little moisture, a fog, or rain, or melted snow makes his wilderness to blossom like the rose. As some strong animal appetites, not satisfied with starch and muscle and fat, are fain to eat that which eats and digests the contents of the crop, the stomach and entrails themselves, so the lichenist loves the tripe of the rock, that which eats and digests the rocks. He eats the eater. Eat-all may be his name. A lichenist fattens where others starve. His provender never fails. . . . There is no such collyrium or salve for sore eyes as these brightening lichens on a moist day. Go bathe and screen your eyes with them in the softened light of the woods.

Feb. 8, 1839. When the poetic frenzy seizes us, we run and scratch with our pen, delighting, like the cock, in the dust we make, but do not detect where the jewel lies which we have in the mean time cast to a distance, or quite covered up again.

Feb. 8, 1841. All we have experienced is so much gone within us, and there lies. It is the

company we keep. One day, in health or sickness, it will come out and be remembered. Neither body nor soul forgets anything. The twig always remembers the wind that shook it, and the stone the cuff it received. Ask the old tree and the sand. . . .

Are we not always in youth so long as we face heaven? We may always live in the morning of our days. To him who seeks early, the sun never gets over the edge of the horizon, but his rays fall slanting forever. . . .

My journal is that of me which would else spill over and run to waste, gleanings from the field which in action I reap. I must not live for it, but, in it, for the gods. They are my correspondent to whom daily I send off this sheet, post-paid. I am clerk in their counting-room, and at evening transfer the account from day-book to ledger. It is a leaf which hangs over my head in the path. I bend the twig, and write my prayers on it; then, letting it go, the bough springs up and shows the scrawl to heaven; as if it were not kept shut in my desk, but were as public a leaf as any in nature. It is papyrus by the river side, it is vellum in the pastures, it is parchment on the hills. . . . Like the sere leaves in yonder vase, these have been gathered far and wide. Upland and lowland, forest and field, have been ransacked.

In our holiest moment, our devil with a leer stands close at hand. He is a very busy devil. . . . When I go forth with zeal to some good work, my devil is sure to get his robe tucked up the first, and arrives there as soon as I, with a look of sincere earnestness, which puts to shame my best intent. . . . He has a winning way of recommending himself by making himself useful. How readily he comes into my best project, and does his work with a quiet and steady cheerfulness which even virtue may take pattern from. . . . I never did a charitable thing, but there he stood, scarce in the rear, hat in hand, partner in the same errand, ready to share the smile of gratitude. Though I shut the door never so quick, and tell him to stay home like a good dog, he will out with me, for I shut in my own legs so, and he escapes in the mean while, and is ready to back and reinforce me in most virtuous deeds. If I turn and say, "Get thee behind me," he then indeed turns too, and takes the lead, though he seems to retire with a pensive and compassionate look, as much as to say, "Ye know not what ye do."

Feb. 8, 1852. . . . Tuckerman says cunningly, "If the rapt admirer of the wonders and beauties of life and being might well come to learn of our knowledge the laws and the history of what he loves, let us remember that we have

the best right to all the pleasure that he has discovered, and that we are not complete if we do not possess it all. Linnæus was as hearty a lover and admirer of nature, as if he had been nothing more." . . .

Carried a new cloak to Johnny Riorden. I found that the shanty was warmed by the simple social relations of the Irish. On Sunday they come from the town and stand in the doorway, and so keep out the cold. One is not cold among his brothers and sisters. What if there is less fire on the hearth, if there is more in the heart. These Irish are not succeeding so ill after all. The little boy goes to the primary school, and proves a foremost boy there, and the mother's brother, who has let himself in the village, tells me that he takes "The Flag of Our Union," if that is the paper edited by an Irishman. It is musical news that Johnny does not love to be kept at home from school in deep snows.

Feb. 8, 1854. . . . Josselyn, speaking of crickets, says, "The Italian who hath them cryed up and down the streets (*Grilli che cantano*), and buyeth them to put into his gardens, if he were in New England would gladly be rid of them, they make such a din in the evening." I am more charmed by the Italian's taste than by Josselyn's impatience.

Feb. 8, 1857. Debauched and worn out

senses require the violent vibrations of an instrument to excite them, but sound and still youthful senses, not enervated by luxury, hear music in the wind and rain and running water. One would think, from reading the critics, that music was intermittent, as a spring in the desert, dependent on some Paganini or Mozart, or heard only when the Pierians or Euterpeans drive through the villages, but music is perpetual, and only hearing is intermittent. I hear it in the softened air of these warm February days which have broken the back of the winter. . . .

Again and again I congratulate myself on my so-called poverty. I was almost disappointed yesterday to find thirty dollars in my desk which I did not know that I possessed, though now I should be sorry to lose it. The week that I go away to lecture is unspeakably cheapened. The preceding and succeeding days are a mere sloping down to and up from it. In the society of many men, or in the midst of what is called success, I find my life of no account, and my spirits rapidly fall. I would rather be the barrenest pasture lying fallow than cursed with the compliments of kings, than be the sulphurous and accursed desert where Babylon once stood. But when I hear only the rustling oak leaf, or the faint metallic cheep of the tree sparrow, for variety in my winter walk, my life becomes

continent, and sweet as the kernel of a nut. I would rather hear a single shrub oak leaf at the end of a wintry glade rustle of its own accord at my approach than receive a ship-load of stars and garters from the strange kings and peoples of the earth. By poverty, *i. e.*, simplicity of life and fewness of incidents, I am solidified and crystallized as a vapor or liquid by cold. It is a singular concentration of strength and energy and flavor. Chastity is perpetual acquaintance with the All. My diffuse and vaporous life becomes as the frost leaves and spiculæ radiant as gems on the weeds and stubble in a winter morning. You think I am impoverishing myself by withdrawing from men, but in my solitude I have woven for myself a silken web or chrysalis, and nymph-like shall erelong burst forth a more perfect creature, fitted for a higher society. . . .

And now another friendship is ended. I do not know what has made my friend doubt me, but I know that in love there is no mistake, and that every estrangement is well-founded. But my destiny is not narrowed, rather, if possible, the broader for it. The heavens withdraw, and arch themselves higher. I am sensible not only of a moral, but even of a grand physical pain, such as gods may feel, about my head and breast, a certain ache and fullness. This rending of a

tie, it is not my work nor thine. It is no accident that we mind; it is only the awards of fate that are affecting. I know of no æons or periods, no life and death, but these meetings and separations. My life is like a stream that is suddenly dammed and has no outlet. But it rises the higher up the hills that shut it in, and will become a deep and silent lake. Certainly there is no event comparable for grandeur with the eternal separation, if we may conceive it so, from a being that we have known. I become in a degree sensible of the meaning of finite and infinite. What a grand significance the word "never" acquires! With one with whom we have walked on high ground, we cannot deal on any lower ground ever after. We have tried so many years to put each other to this immortal use, and have failed. Undoubtedly our good genii have mutually found the material unsuitable. We have hitherto paid each other the highest possible compliment, we have recognized each other constantly as divine, have afforded each other that opportunity to live that no other wealth or kindness can afford. And now for some reason inappreciable by us, it has become necessary for us to withhold this mutual aid. Perchance there is none beside who knows us for a god, and none whom we know for such. Each man and woman is a veritable god or god-

dess, but to the mass of their fellows disguised. There is only one in each case who sees through the disguise. That one who does not stand so near to any man as to see the divinity in him is truly alone. I am perfectly sad at parting from you. I could better have the earth taken away from under my feet, than the thought of you from my mind. One while I think that some great injury has been done, with which you are implicated; again, that you are no party to it. I fear that there may be incessant tragedies, that one may treat his fellow as a god, but receive somewhat less regard from him. I now almost for the first time fear this. Yet I believe that in the long run there is no such inequality.

Feb. 8, 1860. 2 P. M. Up river to Fair Haven Hill. Thermometer 43°. . . . There is a peculiarity in the air when the temperature is thus high, and the weather fair at this season, which makes sounds more clear and pervading, as if they trusted themselves abroad farther in this genial state of the air. A different sound comes to my ear now from iron rails which are struck, from the cawing of crows, etc. Sound is not abrupt, piercing, or rending, but softly sweet and musical. There must be a still more genial and milder air before the bluebird's warble can be heard.

Feb. 8, 1861. Coldest day yet. —22° at

least (all we can read), at 8 A. M., and so far as I can learn, not above —6° all day.

Feb. 9, 1838. It is wholesome advice "to be a man amongst folks." — Go into society, if you will, or if you are unwilling, and take a human interest in its affairs. If you mistake these Messieurs and Mesdames for so many men and women, it is but erring on the safe side, or rather it is their error and not yours. Armed with a manly sincerity, you shall not be trifled with, but drive this business of life. To manage the small talk of a party is to make an effort to do what was at first done admirably, because naturally, at your own fireside.

Feb. 9, 1841. . . .

> "Whoe'er is raised
> For wealth he has not, he is taxed, not praised,"

says Jonson. If you mind the flatterer, you rob yourself, and still cheat him. The fates never exaggerate. Men pass for what they are. The state never fails to get a revenue out of you without a direct tax. What I am praised for which I have not, I put to the account of the gods. It needs a skillful eye to distinguish between their coin and my own. However, there can be no loss either way. For what meed I have earned is equally theirs. Let neither fame nor infamy hit you, but one go as far beyond as the other falls behind. Let the one glance

past you to the gods, and the other wallow where it was engendered. The home thrusts are at helmets upon blocks, and my worst foes but stab an armor through.

My life at this moment is like a summer morning when birds are singing. Yet that is false, for nature's is an idle pleasure in comparison. My hour has a more solid serenity.

I have been breaking silence these twenty-three years, and have hardly made a rent in it. Silence has no end. Speech is but the beginning of it. My friend thinks I *keep* silence who am only choked with letting it out so fast. Does he forget that new mines of secrecy are constantly opening in me? . . .

When your host shuts his door on you, he incloses you in the dwelling of nature. He thrusts you over the threshold of the world. My foes restore me to my friends. — I might say friendship had no ears, as love has no eyes, for no word is evidence in its court. The least act fulfills more than all words profess. The most gracious speech is but partial kindness, but the smallest genuine deed takes the whole man. If he had waited till doomsday, it could never have been uttered.

Feb. 9, 1852. I am interested to see the seeds of the poke, about a dozen, shiny, black, with a white spot, somewhat like a saba bean in shape, the still full granary of the birds.

9 A. M. Up river to Fair Haven Pond. . . . Met —— on the river, . . . fishing, wearing an old coat much patched with many colors. He represents the Indian still. The very patches on his coat and his improvident life do so. I feel that he is as essential a part, nevertheless, of our community as the lawyer in the village. He tells me that he caught three pickerel here the other day that weighed seven pounds all together. It is the old story. The fisherman is a natural story-teller. No man's imagination plays more pranks than his, while he is tending his reels, and trotting from one to another, or watching his cork in summer. He is ever waiting for the sky to fall. He has sent out a venture. He has a ticket in the lottery of fate, and who knows what it may draw. He ever expects to catch a bigger fish yet. He is the most patient and believing of men. Who else will stand so long in wet places? When the hay-maker runs to shelter, he takes down his pole, and bends his steps to the river, glad to have a leisure day. . . . He is more like an inhabitant of nature. . . .

Men tell about the mirage to be seen in certain deserts, and in peculiar states of the atmosphere. The mirage is constant. The state of the atmosphere is continually varying, and to a keen observer objects do not twice present exactly the same appearance. If I invert my head

this morning and look at the woods in the horizon, they do not look so far off and elysian-like as in the afternoon. If I mistake not, it is late in the afternoon when the atmosphere is in such a state that we derive the most pleasure from and are most surprised by this experiment. The prospect is thus a constantly varying mirage answering to the condition of our perceptive faculties and our fluctuating imagination. If we incline our heads never so little, the most familiar things begin to put on some new aspect. If we invert our heads completely, our desecrated wood-lot appears far off, incredible, elysian, unprofaned by us. As you cannot swear through glass, no more can you swear through air, the thinnest section of it. . . . When was not the air as elastic as our spirits. . . . It is a new glass placed over the picture every hour. . . .

When I break off a twig of green-barked sassafras, as I am going through the woods now, and smell it, I am startled to find it fragrant as in summer. It is an importation of all the spices of Oriental summers into our New England winter, very foreign to the snow and the oak leaves.

Feb. 9, 1853. . . . Saw the grisly bear near the Haymarket [Boston] to-day, said (?) to weigh nineteen hundred pounds; apparently too much. He looked four feet and a few inches in height

by as much in length, not including his great head and his tail, which was invisible. He looked gentle, and continually sucked his claws, and cleaned between them with his tongue. Small eyes and funny little ears. Perfectly bearish, with a strong wild beast scent; fed on Indian meal and water. Hind paws a foot long. Lying down with his feet up against the bars; often sitting up in the corner on his hind quarters.

Feb. 9, 1855. Snowed harder in the night, and blew considerably. . . . I was so sure this storm would bring snowbirds that I went to the window at ten to look for them, and there they were. Also, a downy woodpecker (perhaps a hairy) flitted high across the street to an elm in front of the house, and commenced assiduously tapping, his head going like a hammer.

Feb. 9, 1858. . . . Saw, at Simon Brown's, a sketch, apparently made with a pen, on which was written, "Concord Jail, near Boston, America," and on a fresher piece of paper, on which the above was pasted, was written, "The jail in which General Sir Archld Campbell and —— Wilson were confined when taken off Boston in America by a French Privateer." A letter on the back side from Mr. Lewis of Framingham to Mr. Brown stated that Mr. Lewis had received the sketch from a grandson of Wilson who drew it. — You are supposed to be in the

jail yard, or close to it westward, and see the old jail, gambrel-roofed, the old Hurd house (partly) west of the grave-yard, the grave-yard and Dr. Hurd house, and over the last, and to the north of it, a wooded hill, apparently Windmill Hill. Just north of the Hurd house, beyond it, apparently the Court-house and School-house, both with belfries, also the road to the battle ground, and a distant farmhouse on a hill, French's or Buttrick's, perhaps.

Feb. 10, 1841. . . . Our thoughts and actions may be very private for a long time, for they demand a more catholic publicity to be displayed in than the world can afford. Our best deeds shun the narrow walks of men, and are not ambitious of the faint light the world can shed on them, but delight to unfold themselves in that public ground between God and conscience. . . . Within, where I resolve and deal with principles, there is more space and room than anywhere without where my hands execute. Men should hear of your virtue only as they hear the creaking of the earth's axle and the music of the spheres. It will fall into the course of nature, and be effectually concealed by publicness.

Feb. 10, 1852. Now if there are any who think I am vainglorious, that I set myself up above others, and crow over their low estate,

let me say that I could tell a pitiful story respecting myself as well as them, if my spirits held out to do it. I could encourage them with a sufficient list of failures, and could flow as humbly as the very gutters themselves. . . . I think worse of myself than they can possibly think of me, being better acquainted with the man. I put the best face on the matter. I will tell them this secret, if they will not tell it to anybody else.

Write while the heat is in you. When the farmer burns a hole in his yoke, he carries the iron quickly from the fire to the wood, for every moment it is less effectual to penetrate it. . . . The writer who postpones the recording of his thoughts, uses an iron which has cooled to burn a hole with. He cannot inflame the minds of his audience. . . .

I saw yesterday in the snow on the ice on the S. side of Fair Haven Pond some hundreds of honey bees dead and sunk half an inch below the crust. They had evidently come forth from their hive, perhaps in a large hemlock on the bank close by, and had fallen on the snow, chilled to death. Their bodies extended about three rods from the tree toward the pond.

Feb. 10, 1854. . . . I observe the great, well-protected buds of the balm of Gilead, spear-head-like. There is no shine upon them now,

and their viscidness is not very apparent. A great many willow catkins show a little down peeping from under the points of the scales, but I have no doubt that all this was done last fall. I noticed it then.

Feb. 10, 1855. . . . I hear the faint metallic chirp of a tree sparrow in the yard from time to time, or perchance the mew of a linaria. It is worth while to let some pigweed grow in your garden, if only to attract these winter visitors. It would be a pity to have these weeds burned in the fall. Of the former, I see in the winter but three or four commonly at a time; of the latter, large flocks. This is in or after considerable snow-storms.

Feb. 10, 1856. . . . P. M. To Walden. Returning I saw a fox on the railroad, . . . eight or nine rods from me. He looked of a dirty yellow, and lean. I did not notice the white tip to his tail. Seeing me, he pricked up his ears, and at first ran up and along the E. bank on the crust, then changed his mind, and came down the steep bank, crossed the railroad before me, and gliding up the west bank, disappeared in the woods. He coursed or glided along easily, appearing not to lift his feet high, leaping over obstacles with his tail extended straight behind. He leaped over the ridge of snow about two feet high and three wide between the tracks,

very gracefully. I followed examining his tracks. There was about a quarter of an inch of recent snow above the crust, but for the most part he broke in two or three inches. I slumped from one to three feet. . . . He went off at an easy gliding pace such as he might keep up for a long time, pretty direct after his first turning.

Feb. 10, 1857. . . . Burton, the traveler, quotes an Arab saying, "Voyaging is a victory," which he refers to the feeling of independence on overcoming the difficulties and dangers of the desert. But I think that commonly voyaging is a defeat, a rout to which the traveler is compelled by want of valor. The traveler's peculiar valor is commonly a bill of exchange. He is at home anywhere but where he was born and bred, petitioning some Sir Joseph Banks or other representative of a Geographical Society to avail himself of his restlessness, and if not receiving a favorable answer, necessarily going off somewhere next morning. It is a prevalent disease which attacks Americans especially, both men and women, the opposite to nostalgia. Yet it does not differ much from nostalgia. I read the story of one voyager round the world, who it seemed to me, having started, had no other object but to get home again, only she took the longest way round. The traveler, fitted out by

some Sir Joseph Banks, snatches at a fact or two in behalf of science, as he goes, just as a panther in his leap will take off a man's sleeve, and land twenty feet beyond him, when traveling down hill.

Feb. 10, 1860. . . . The river where open is very black, as usual, when the waves run high, for each wave casts a shadow. Theophrastus notices that the roughened water is black, and says it is because fewer rays fall on it, and the light is dissipated. . . .

I do not know of any more exhilarating walking than up or down a broad field of smooth ice like this in a cold, glittering, winter day, when your rubbers give you a firm hold on the ice.

Feb. 11, 1841. True help, for the most part, implies a greatness in him who is to be helped as well as in the helper. It takes a god to be helped even. A great person, though unconsciously, will constantly give you great opportunities to serve him, but a mean one will quite preclude all active benevolence. It needs but simply and greatly to want it for once, that all true men may contend who shall be foremost to render aid. My neighbor's state must pray to heaven so devoutly, yet disinterestedly, as he never prayed in words, before my ears can hear. It must ask divinely. But men so cobble and botch their request that you must stoop as low

as they to give them aid. Their meanness would drag down your deed to be a compromise with conscience, and not leave it to be done on the high table-land of the benevolent soul. . . . But if I am to serve them, I must not serve the devil. . . . We go about mending the times when we should be building the eternity.

Feb. 11, 1852. . . . I have lived some thirty odd years on this planet, and I have yet to hear the first syllable of valuable or even earnest advice from my seniors. They have told me nothing, and probably can tell me nothing, to the purpose. There is life, an experiment untried by me, and it does not avail me that you have tried it. If I have any valuable experience I am sure to reflect that this my mentors said nothing about. What were mysteries to the child remain mysteries to the old man.

It is a mistake to suppose that in a country where railroads and steamboats and the printing press and the church, where the usual evidences of civilization exist, the condition of a very large body of the inhabitants may not be as degraded as that of savages. . . . To know this, I should not need to look farther than to the shanties which everywhere line our railroads, that last improvement in civilization. But I will refer you to Ireland, which is marked as one of the white, or enlightened spots on the map

Yet I have no doubt that that nation's rulers are as wise as the average of civilized rulers.

Feb. 12. Living all winter with an open door for light, and no visible wood-pile, the forms of old and young are permanently contracted through long shrinking from cold, and their faces pinched by want. I have seen an old crone sitting bare-headed on the hillside in the middle of January, while it was raining, and the ground was slowly thawing under her, knitting there. . . . There is no greater squalidness in any part of the world. Contrast the condition of these Irish with that of the North American Indian, or the South Sea Islander, or any other savage race before they are degraded by contact with civilized man.

Feb. 11, 1853. . . . While surveying on the Hunt farm the other day, behind Simon Brown's house, I heard a remarkable echo. In the course of surveying, being obliged to call aloud to my assistant from every side and almost every part of a farm in succession and at various hours of a day, I am pretty sure to discover an echo, if any exists. That day it was encouraging and soothing to hear one. After so many days of comparatively insignificant drudgery with stupid companions, this leisure, this sportiveness, this generosity in nature, sympathizing with the better part of me, somebody I could talk with,

one degree at least better than talking with one's self. Ah, Simon Brown's premises harbor a hired man and a hired maid he wots not of; some voice of somebody I pined to hear, with whom I could form a community. I did wish rather to linger there and call all day to the air, and hear my words repeated, but a vulgar necessity dragged me along round the bounds of the farm to hear only the stale answers of my chainman shouted back to me. . . . Has it to do with the season of the year? I have since heard an echo on Moore's farm.

It was the memorable event of the day, that echo I heard, not anything my companions said, or the travelers I met, or my thoughts, for they were all mere repetitions or echoes in the worst sense of what I had heard and thought before many times, but this echo was accompanied with novelty, and by its repetition of my voice it did more than double that. It was a profounder Socratic method of suggesting thoughts unutterable to me the speaker. Here was one I heartily love to talk with. Under such favorable auspices, I could converse with myself, could reflect. The hour, the atmosphere, and the conformation of the ground permitted it.

Feb. 11, 1854. 7.30 A. M. Snow fleas lie in black patches like some of those dark, rough lichens on rocks, or like ink spots three or four

inches in diameter, about the grass stems or willows, on the ice which froze last night. When I breathe on them, I find them all alive and ready to skip. Also the water, when I break the ice, arouses them.

I saw yesterday in a muddy spring in Tarbell's meadow many cockle shells on the bottom, with their feet out, and marks as if they had been moving.

When I read of the catkins of the alder and the willow, etc., scattering their yellow pollen, they impress me as a vegetation which belongs to the earliest and most innocent dawn of nature, as if they must have preceded other trees in the order of creation, as they precede them annually in their blossoming and leafing. . . . For how many æons did the willow shed its yellow pollen annually before man was created!

In the winter we so value the semblance of fruit that even the dry, black female catkins of the alder are an interesting sight, not to mention, on shoots rising a foot or two above these, the red or mulberry male catkins in little parcels dangling at a less than right angle with the stems, and the short female ones at their bases.

Apparently I read Cato and Varro from the same motives that Virgil did, and as I read the almanac, the "N. E. Farmer," or "Cultivator," or Howitt's "Seasons."

Feb. 11, 1856. . . . Saw a partridge by the river side . . . which at first I mistook for the top of a fence post above the snow amid some alders. I shouted and waved my hand four rods off to see if it was one, but there was no motion, and I thought surely it must be a post. Nevertheless I resolved to investigate. Within three rods I saw to my surprise that it was indeed a partridge, standing perfectly still, with its head erect and neck stretched upward. It was as complete a deception as if it had designedly placed itself on the line of the fence and in the proper place for a post. It finally stepped off daintily with a teetering gait and head up, and took to wing.

Feb. 11, 1859. Now, as often after a freshet in cold weather, the ice which had formed around and frozen to the trees and bushes along the shore, settling, draws them down to the ground or water, after breaking them extensively. It reminds you of an alligator or other evil genius of the river pulling the trees and bushes, which had come to drink, into the water. If a maple or alder is unfortunate enough to slip its lower limbs into the freshet, dallying with it, their fate is sealed, for the water freezing that night takes fast hold of them like a vise, and when the water runs out from beneath, an irresistible weight brings them down to the

ground and holds them there. Only the spring sun will soften the heart of this relentless monster when commonly it is too late.

Feb. 12, 1840. . . . Knavery is more foolish than folly, since, half knowing its own foolishness, it still persists. The knave has reduced folly to a system, is the prudent, common-sense fool.

Feb. 12, 1851. . . . I find that it is an excellent walk for variety and novelty and wildness to keep round the edge of the meadow. The ice not being strong enough to bear, and transparent as water, on the bare ground or snow just between the highest water mark and the present water line is a narrow, meandering walk rich in unexpected views and objects. The line of rubbish which marks the higher tides, withered flags and seeds and twigs and cranberries, is to my eyes a very agreeable and significant line which nature traces along the edge of the meadows. It is a strongly marked, enduring, natural line which in summer reminds me that the water has once stood over where I walk. Sometimes the grooved trees tell the same tale. The wrecks of the meadow fill a thousand coves, and tell a thousand tales to those who can read them; our prairial, mediterranean shore. . . . If you cannot go on the ice, you are then gently compelled to take this course, which is, on the whole,

more beautiful, to follow the sinuosities of the meadow.

Feb. 12, 1854. . . . P. M. Skate to Pantry Brook. . . . One accustomed to glide over a boundless and variegated ice floor like this cannot be much attracted by tessellated floors and mosaic work. I skate over a thin ice all tessellated, so to speak, or on which you see the forms of the crystals as they shot. . . . To make a perfect winter day like this, you must have a clear, sparkling air, with a sheen from the snow, sufficient cold, no wind, and the warmth must come directly from the sun. It must not be a thawing warmth. The tension of nature must not be relaxed. The earth must be resonant, if bare. You hear the lisping music of chickadees from time to time, and the unrelenting steel-cold scream of a jay, unmelted, that never flows into a song, a sort of wintry trumpet, screaming cold, hard, tense, frozen music like the winter sky itself. . . . There is no hint of incubation in the jay's scream. There is no cushion for sound now. It tears our ears.

I frequently see three or four old white birches standing together on the edge of a pond or meadow, and am struck by the pleasing manner in which they will commonly be grouped, how they spread so as to make room for each other, and make an agreeable impression upon

the eye. Methinks I have seen groups of three in different places arranged almost exactly alike.

Returning I overhauled a muskrat's house by Bidens Brook. For want of other material it was composed of grass flags, and in a great measure (one half) of twigs and sticks, mostly sweet-gale, both dead and alive, and roots, from six inches to two feet in length. These were in fact the principal material of it, and it was a large one, two feet above the ice. I was surprised to find that these sticks, both green and dead, had the greater part of them been gnawed off by the rat, and some were nearly half an inch in diameter. They were cut off not at a right angle, with a smooth cut, but by successive cuts, smooth as with a knife, the twig being at the same time bent down, which produced a sloping, and, so to speak, terraced surface. I did not know before that the muskrat resembled the beaver in this respect also. It was chiefly the sweet-gale thus cut, commonly the top left on two feet long, but sometimes cut off six inches long.

I see, as I skate, reflected from the surface of the ice, flakes of rainbow, somewhat like cobwebs, where the great slopes of the crystallization fall at the right angle, six inches or a foot across, but at so small an angle with the horizon

that they had seemed absolutely flat and level before. Think of this kind of mosaic and tessellation for your floor, composed of crystals variously set, made up of surfaces not absolutely level, though level to the touch of the feet and to the noonday eye, but just enough inclined to reflect the colors of the rainbow when the sun gets low.

Feb. 12, 1857. 7.30 A. M. The caterpillar which I placed last night on the snow beneath the thermometer is frozen stiff again, this time not being curled up, the temperature being —6° now. Yet being placed on the mantel-piece, it thaws and begins to crawl in five or ten minutes, before the rear part of its body is limber. Perhaps they were revived last week when the thermometer stood at 52° and 53°.

Feb. 12, 1860. 2 P. M. 22°. Walk up river to Fair Haven Pond. Clear and windy. . . . In this cold, clear, rough air from the N. W. we walk amid what simple surroundings, surrounded by our thoughts or imaginary objects. . . . Above me is a cloudless blue sky, beneath is the sky blue, *i. e.*, sky-reflecting ice, with patches of snow scattered over it like mackerel clouds. At a distance in several directions I see the tawny earth streaked or spotted with white, where the bank, or hills and fields appear, or the green-black, evergreen forests, or the brown,

or russet, or tawny deciduous woods, and here and there, where the agitated surface of the river is exposed, the blue-black water. That dark-eyed water, especially where I see it at right angles with the direction of the sun, is it not the first sign of spring? How its darkness contrasts with the general lightness of the winter! It has more life in it than any part of the earth's surface. It is where one of the arteries of the earth is palpable, visible. In winter not only some creatures, but the very earth is partially dormant. Vegetation ceases, and rivers, to some extent, cease to flow. Therefore when I see the water exposed in mid-winter, it is as if I saw a skunk or even a striped squirrel out. It is as if the woodchuck consoled himself, and snuffed the air to see if it were warm enough to be trusted. It excites me to see early in the spring that black artery leaping once more through the snow-clad town. All is tumult and life there. . . . Where this artery is shallowest, *i. e.*, comes nearest to the surface and runs swiftest, there it shows itself soonest, and you may see its pulse beat. There are the wrists, temples of the earth where I feel its pulse with my eye. The living waters, not the dead earth. . . . Returning just before sunset, I see the ice beginning to be green, and a rose color to be reflected from the low snow patches. I see the color from the

snow first where there is some shade, as where the shadow of a maple falls afar over the ice and snow. From this is reflected a purple tinge when I see none elsewhere. Some shadow or twilight then is necessary, umbra mixed with the reflected sun. Off Holden wood where the low rays fall on the river through the fringe of the wood, the patches are not rose color, but a very dark purple, like a grape, and thus there are all degrees from pure white to black. As I cross Hubbard's broad meadow, the snow patches are a most beautiful crystalline purple, like the petals of some flowers, or as if tinged with cranberry juice. . . .

I walk over a smooth green sea or æquor, the sun just disappearing in the cloudless horizon, amid thousands of these flat isles as purple as the petals of a flower. It would not be more enchanting to walk amid the purple clouds of the sunset sky. And, by the way, this is but a sunset sky under our feet, produced by the same law, the same slanting rays and twilight. Here the clouds are these patches of snow or frozen vapor, and the ice is the greenish sky between them. Thus all of heaven is realized on earth. You have seen those purple, fortunate isles in the sunset heavens, and that green and amber sky between them. Would you believe that you could ever walk amid those isles? You can on

many a winter evening. I have done so a hundred times.

Thus the sky and the earth sympathize, and are subject to the same laws, and in the horizon they, as it were, meet and are seen to be one. . . .

We have such a habit of looking away that we see not what is around us. How few are aware that in winter, when the earth is covered with snow and ice, the phenomenon of the sunset sky is double. The one is on the earth around us, the other in the horizon.

Feb. 13, 1838. It is hard to subject ourselves to an influence. It must steal upon us when we expect it not, and its work be all done ere we are aware of it. If we make advances, it is shy; if, when we feel its presence, we presume to pry into its freemasonry, it vanishes, and leaves us alone in our folly.

All fear of the world or consequences is swallowed up in a manly anxiety to do truth justice.

Feb. 13, 1840. An act of integrity is to an act of duty what the French verb *être* is to *devoir*. Duty is that which *devrait être*. Duty belongs to the understanding, but genius is not dutiful. . . . The perfect man has both genius and talent; the one is his head, the other, his foot. By one, he is; by the other, he lives.

The consciousness of man is the consciousness of God, the end of the world.

The very thrills of genius are disorganizing. The body is never quite acclimated to its atmosphere, but how often succumbs, and goes into a decline.

Feb. 13, 1841. By the truthfulness of our story to-day, we help explain ourselves for all our life henceforth. How we hamper and belay ourselves by the least exaggeration. The truth is God's concern; he will sustain it. But who can afford to maintain a lie? We have taken away one of the pillars of Hercules, and must support the world on our shoulders, who might have walked freely upon it.

Feb. 13, 1851. Skated to Sudbury. A beautiful summer-like day. The meadows were frozen just enough to bear. Examined now the fleets of ice flakes close at hand. They are a very singular and interesting phenomenon which I do not remember to have seen. I should say that when the water was frozen about as thick as pasteboard, a violent gust had here and there broken it up, and while the wind and waves held it on its edge, the increasing cold froze it in firmly. So it seemed, for the flakes were, for the most part, turned one way, *i. e.*, standing on one side, you saw only their edges, on another, the N. E. or S. W., their sides. They were com-

monly of a triangular form, like a shoulder-of-mutton (?) sail, slightly scalloped, like shells. They looked like a fleet of a thousand mackerel fishers under a press of sail, careering before a smacking breeze. Sometimes the sun and wind had reduced them to the thinness of writing paper, and they fluttered and rustled and tinkled merrily. I skated through them and scattered their wrecks around. Every half mile or mile, as you skate up the river, you see these crystal fleets. . . .

Again I saw to-day half a mile off in Sudbury a sandy spot on the top of a hill, where I prophesied that I should find traces of the Indians. When within a dozen rods, I distinguished the foundation of a lodge, and merely passing over it, I saw many fragments of the arrowhead stone. I have frequently distinguished these localities half a mile off, gone forward, and picked up arrowheads.

Saw in a warm, muddy brook in Sudbury, quite open and exposed, the skunk-cabbage spathes above water. The tops of the spathes were frost-bitten, but the fruit sound. There was one partly expanded, the first flower of the season, for it is a flower. I doubt if there is a month without its flower. . . .

In society, in the best institutions of men, I remark a certain precocity. When we should

be growing children, we are already little men. Infants as we are, we make haste to be weaned from our great mother's breast, and cultivate our parts by intercourse with one another. . . . I would not have every man, nor every part of a man, cultivated any more than I would have every acre of earth cultivated. Some must be preparing a mould by the annual decay of the forests which they sustain.

Feb. 13, 1852. Color, which is the poet's wealth, is so expensive, that most take to mere outline or pencil sketches, and become men of science.

Feb. 13, 1855. . . . The tracks of partridges are more remarkable in this snow than usual, it is so light, being, at the same time, a foot deep. . . . I see where many have dived into the snow, apparently last night, on the side of a shrub oak hollow. In four places they have passed quite underneath it for more than a foot; in one place, eighteen inches. They appear to have dived or burrowed into it, then passed along a foot or more underneath, and squatted there, perhaps with their heads out. . . . I scared one from its hole only half a rod in front of me, now at 11 A. M. . . . It is evidently a hardy bird, and in the above respects, too, is like the rabbit, which squats under a brake or bush in the snow. I see the traces of the

latter in hollows in the snow in such places, their forms. . . .

One of these pigweeds in the yard lasts the snowbirds all winter. After every snow-storm, they revisit it. How inexhaustible their granary.

To resume the subject of partridges, looking farther in an open place . . . amid the shrub oaks and low pitch pines, I found as many as twenty or thirty places where partridges had lodged in the snow apparently the last night or the night before. You could see commonly where their bodies had first struck the snow, and furrowed it for a foot or two, twenty-six inches wide, then entered and gone underneath two feet, and rested at the farther end. . . . Is it not likely that they remain quite under the snow there, and do not put their heads out till ready to start? They do not go under deep, and the gallery they make is mostly filled up behind them, leaving only a thin crust above. Then invariably just beyond this resting place, you could see the marks made by their wings when they took their departure. These distinct impressions made by their wings on the pure snow, so common on all hands, though the bird that made it is gone, and there is no trace beyond, affect me like some mystic Oriental symbol, the winged globe or what not, as if made by a spirit. In some places you would see a furrow

and hollow in the snow where there was no track for rods around, as if a large snow-ball or cannon-ball had struck it, where apparently the birds had not paused in their flight. It is evidently a regular thing with them thus to lodge in the snow.

Feb. 13, 1859. P. M. On ice to Fair Haven Pond. . . . The yellowish ice which froze yesterday and last night is thickly and evenly strewn with fibrous frost crystals very much like bits of asbestos, an inch or more long, sometimes arranged like a star or rosette, one for every inch or two. . . . I think this is the vapor from the water which found its way up through the ice, and froze in the night. It is sprinkled like some kind of grain, and is in certain places much more thickly strewn, as where a little snow shows itself above the ice. — The old ice is covered with a dry, powdery snow about one inch deep, from which as I walk toward the sun, this perfectly clear, bright afternoon at half-past three o'clock, the colors of the rainbow are reflected from a myriad fine facets. It is as if the dust of diamonds and other precious stones were spread all around. The blue and red predominate. Though I distinguish these colors everywhere toward the sun, they are so much more abundantly reflected to me from two directions that I see two distinct rays or arms, so to

call them, of this rainbow-like dust stretching away from me and about half a dozen feet wide, the two arms including an angle of about 60°. When I look from the sun, I see merely dazzling white points. I can easily see some of these dazzling grains fifteen or twenty rods distant on any side, though the facet which reflects the light cannot be more than a tenth or twelfth of an inch at most. Yet I might easily, and commonly do, overlook all this.

Winter comes to make walking possible where there was no walking in summer. Not till winter can we take possession of the whole of our territory. I have three great highways raying out from one centre which is near my door. I may walk down the main river, or up either of its two branches. Could any avenues be contrived more convenient? With the river I am not compelled to walk in the tracks of horses.

Never is there so much light in the air as in one of these bright winter afternoons when all the earth is covered with new-fallen snow, and there is not a cloud in the sky. The sky is much the darkest side, like the bluish lining of an egg-shell. With this white earth beneath, and that spotless, skimmed-milk sky above him, man is but a black speck inclosed in a white egg-shell.

Sometimes, in our prosaic moods, life appears

to us but a certain number more of days like those we have lived, to be cheered not by more friends and friendship, but probably fewer and less, as perchance we anticipate the end of this day before it is done, close the shutters, and, with a cheerless resignation, commence the barren evening whose fruitless end we clearly see. We despondingly think that all of life which is left is only this experience repeated a certain number of times, and so it would be, if it were not for the faculty of imagination.

The wonderful stillness of a winter day! the sources of sound are, as it were, frozen up. Scarcely a tinkling rill of it is to be heard. When we listen, we hear only that sound of the surf of our internal sea rising and swelling in our ears as in two sea-shells. It is the sabbath of the year, stillness audible, or at most we hear the ice belching and crackling, as if struggling for utterance.

A transient acquaintance with any phenomenon is not sufficient to make it completely the subject of your muse. You must be so conversant with it as to *remember* it, and be reminded of it long afterward, while it lies remotely fair and elysian in the horizon, approachable only by the imagination.

Feb. 13, 1860. . . . It is surprising what a variety of distinct colors the winter can show us,

using but few pigments. The principal charm of a winter walk over ice is perhaps the peculiar and pure colors exhibited. There is the *red* of the sunset sky and of the snow at evening, and in rainbow flocks during the day, and in sun-dogs.

The *blue* of the sky, and of the ice and water reflected, and of shadows on snow.

The *yellow* of the sun, and the morning and evening sky, and of the sedge (or straw color, bright when lit on the edge of ice at evening), and all these three colors in hoar frost crystals.

Then there is the *purple* of the snow in drifts or on hills, of the mountains, and the clouds at evening.

The *green* of evergreen woods, of the ice and water, and of the sky toward evening.

The *orange* of the sky at evening.

The *white* of snow and clouds, and the *black* of clouds, of water agitated, and water saturating thin snow or ice.

The *russet*, and *brown*, *gray*, etc., of deciduous woods.

The *tawny* of the bare earth.

I suspect that the green and rose (or purple) are not noticed on ice and snow unless it is pretty cold, and perhaps there is less greenness of the ice now than in December when the days

were shorter. The ice now may be too old and white. . . . The sun being in a cloud, partly obscured, I see a very dark purple tinge on the flat drifts on the ice, earlier than usual, and when afterward the sun comes out below the cloud, I see no purple nor rose. Hence it seems that the twilight has as much or more to do with this phenomenon, supposing the sun to be low, than the slight angle of its rays with the horizon.

Always you have to contend with the stupidity of men. It is like a stiff soil, a hard pan. If you go deeper than usual, you are sure to meet with a pan made harder even by the superficial cultivation. The stupid you have always with you. Men are more obedient at first to words than to ideas. They mind names more than things. Read them a lecture on "Education," naming that subject, and they will think they have heard something important, but call it "Transcendentalism," and they will think it moonshine. Or halve your lecture, and put a psalm at the beginning and a prayer at the end of it, and they will pronounce it good without thinking.

The Scripture rule, "Unto him that hath, shall be given," is true of composition. The more you have thought and written on a given theme, the more you can still write. Thought breeds thought. It grows under your hands.

Feb. 14, 1840. . . . A very meagre natural history suffices to make me a child. Only their names and genealogy make me love fishes. I would know even the number of their fin rays, and how many scales compose the lateral line. I fancy I am amphibious and swim in all the brooks and pools in the neighborhood, with the perch and bream, or doze under the pads of our river amid the winding aisles and corridors formed by their stems, with the stately pickerel.

Feb. 14, 1841. I am confined to the house by bronchitis, and so seek to content myself with that quiet and serene life there is in a warm corner by the fireside, and see the sky through the chimney-top. Sickness should not be allowed to extend farther than the body. We need only to retreat farther within us, to preserve uninterrupted the continuity of serene hours to the end of our lives. As soon as I find my chest is not of tempered steel, and heart of adamant, I bid good-by to them and look out for a new nature. I will be liable to no accidents.

I shall never be poor while I can command a still hour in which to take leave of my sin.

Feb. 14, 1851. Consider the farmer who is commonly regarded as the healthiest man. He may be the toughest, but he is not the healthiest.

He has lost his elasticity. He can neither run nor jump. Health is the free use and command of all our faculties, and equal development. His is the health of the ox, an overworked buffalo. His joints are stiff. The resemblance is true even in particulars. He is cast away in a pair of cowhide boots, and travels at an ox's pace. . . . It would do him good to be thoroughly shampooed to make him supple. His health is an insensibility to all influence. But only the healthiest man in the world is sensible to the finest influence; he who is affected by more or less electricity in the air.

We shall see but a little way, if we require to understand what we see. How few things can a man measure with the tape of his understanding! How many greater things might he be seeing in the mean while! One afternoon in the fall, November 21st, I saw Fair Haven Pond with its island and meadow; between the island and the shore, a strip of perfectly smooth water in the lee of the island and two hawks sailing over it, and something more I saw which cannot easily be described, which made me say to myself that the landscape could not be improved. I did not see how it could be improved. Yet I do not know what these things can be. I begin to see such objects only when I leave off understanding them, and afterwards remember

them. I did not appreciate them before. But I get no farther than this. How adapted these forms and colors to our eyes, a meadow and its islands. What are these things? Yet the hawks and the ducks keep so aloof, and nature is so reserved. We are made to love the river and the meadow, as the wind to ripple the water.

Feb. 14, 1852. . . . I hate that my motive for visiting a friend should be that I want society, that it should lie in my poverty and weakness, and not in his and my riches and strength. His friendship should make me strong enough to do without him.

Feb. 14, 1854. P. M. Down railroad. A moist, thawing, cloudy afternoon, preparing to rain. The telegraph resounds at every post. The first strain from the American lyre. In Stow's wood by the deep Cut, hear the *quah quah* of the white-breasted, black-capped nuthatch. I went up the bank and stood by the fence. A little family of titmice gathered about me searching for their food both on the ground and on the trees with great industry and intentness, now and then pursuing each other. There were two nuthatches at least talking to each other. One hung with his head down on a large pitch pine pecking the bark for a long time, leaden blue above, with a black cap and white breast. It uttered almost constantly a faint but sharp . . .

creak, difficult to trace home, which appeared to be answered by a baser and louder *quah quah* from the other. A downy woodpecker with the red spot on his hind head and his cassock open behind, showing his white robe, kept up an incessant loud tapping on another pitch pine. All at once, an active little brown creeper makes its appearance, a small, rather slender bird with a long tail and sparrow-colored back, and white beneath. It commences at the bottom of a tree and glides up very rapidly, then suddenly darts to the bottom of a new tree, and repeats the same movement, not resting long in one place, or on one tree. These birds are all feeding and flitting along together, but the chickadees are the most numerous and the most confiding. I observe that three of the four kinds thus associated, viz., the chickadee, nuthatch, and woodpecker, have black crowns, at least the first two, very conspicuous black caps. I cannot but think that this sprightly association and readiness to burst into song have to do with the prospect of spring, more light, and warmth, and thawing weather. The titmice keep up an incessant, faint, tinkling *tchip;* now and then one utters a lively *day-day-day*, and once or twice one commenced a gurgling strain quite novel, startling, and spring-like. Beside this I heard the distant crowing of cocks, and the divine

humming of the telegraph, all spring-promising sounds. The chickadee has quite a variety of notes. The phœbe one I did not hear to-day.

Feb. 14, 1856. . . . How impatient, how rampant, how precocious these osiers! They have hardly made two shoots from the sand in as many springs, when silvery catkins burst out along them, and anon, golden blossoms and downy seeds, spreading their race with incredible rapidity. Thus they multiply and clan together. Thus they take advantage even of the railroad, which elsewhere disturbs and invades their domains. May I ever be in as good spirits as a willow. They never despair. Is there no moisture longer in Nature which they can transmute into sap? They are emblems of youth, joy, and everlasting life. Scarcely is their growth restrained by winter, but their silvery down peeps forth in the warmest days in January (?).

Feb. 14, 1857. . . . It is a fine, somewhat spring-like day. The ice is softening so that skates begin to cut in, and numerous caterpillars are now crawling about on the ice and snow, the thermometer in the shade N. of house standing at 42°. So it appears that they must often thaw in the course of the winter and find nothing to eat.

Feb. 15, 1840. The good seem to inhale a

generous atmosphere, and to be bathed in a more precious light than other men. Accordingly, Virgil describes the *sedes beatas* thus,

> Largior hic campos æther et lumine vestit
> Purpureo: Solemque suum, sua sidera nôrunt.

Feb. 15, 1851. Alas! alas! when my friend begins to deal in confessions, breaks silence, makes a theme of friendship (which then is always something past), and descends to merely human relations. As long as there is a spark of love remaining, cherish that alone. Only that can be kindled into a flame. — I thought that friendship, that love was possible between us. I thought that we had not withdrawn very far asunder. But now that my friend rashly, thoughtlessly, profanely speaks, recognizing the distance between us, that distance seems infinitely increased. Of our friends we do not incline to speak, to complain to others; we would not disturb the foundations of confidence that may still be.

Why should we not still continue to live with the intensity and rapidity of infants? Is not the world, are not the heavens, as unfathomed as ever? Have we exhausted any joy, any sentiment?

Feb. 15, 1852. Perhaps I am descended from the Northman named "Thorer, the Dog-footed." Thorer Hund, to judge from his name, belonged

to the same family. "He was one of the most powerful men in the north." Thorer is one of the most common names in the chronicles of the Northmen, if not the most so.

Feb. 15, 1855. . . . All day a steady, warm, imprisoning rain, carrying off the snow, not unmusical on my roof. It is a rare time for the student and reader who cannot go abroad in the P. M., provided he can keep awake, for we are wont to be as drowsy as cats in such weather. Without, it is not walking, but wading. It is so long since I have heard it, that the steady rushing, soaking sound of the rain on the shingles is musical. The fire needs no replenishing, and we save our fuel. It seems like a distant forerunner of spring. It is because I am allied to the elements that the sound of the rain is thus soothing to me. This sound sinks into my spirit, as the water into the earth, reminding me of the season when snow and ice will be no more, when the earth will be thawed, and drink up the rain as fast as it falls.

Feb. 15, 1858. To Cambridge and Boston. Saw at a menagerie a Canada lynx, said to have been taken at the White Mountains. It looked much like a monstrous gray cat standing on stilts, with its tail cut to five inches, a tuft of hair on each ear, and a ruff under the throat.

Feb. 15, 1861. . . . A kitten is so flexible

that she is almost double. The hind parts are equivalent to another kitten with which the fore part plays. She does not discover that her tail belongs to her till you tread upon it. How eloquent she can be with her tail. She jumps into a chair and then stands on her hind legs to look out the window, looks steadily at objects far and near, first gazing this side, then that, for she loves to look out a window as much as any gossip. Ever and anon she bends back her ears to hear what is going on within the room, and all the while her eloquent tail is reporting the progress and success of her survey by speaking gestures. . . . Then what a delicate hint she can give with her tail, passing perhaps underneath as you sit at table, and letting the tip of her tail just touch your legs, as much as to say I am here and ready for that milk or meat, though she may not be so forward as to look round at you when she emerges. — Only skin deep lies the feral nature of the cat unchanged still. I just had the misfortune to rock on to our cat's legs, as she was lying playfully spread out under my chair. Imagine the sound that arose, and which was excusable, but what will you say to the fierce growls and flashing eyes with which she met me for a quarter of an hour thereafter. No tiger in its jungle could have been savager.

Feb. 16, 1841. For how slight an accident shall two noble souls wait to bring them together.

Feb. 16, 1852. It is interesting to meet an ox with handsomely spreading horns. There is a great variety of sizes and forms, though one horn commonly matches the other. I am willing to turn out for those that spread their branches wide. Large and spreading horns, I fancy, indicate a certain vegetable force and naturalization in the wearer; they soften and ease off the distinction between the animal and the vegetable, the unhorned animals and the trees. . . . The deer that run in the woods, as the moose, for instance, carry perfect trees on their heads. The French call them "bois." No wonder there are fables of centaurs and the like. No wonder there is a story of a hunter who when his bullets failed fired cherry stones into the heads of his game and so trees sprouted out of them, and the hunter refreshed himself with the cherries. It is a perfect piece of mythology which belongs to these days. Oxen, which are deanimalized, to some extent, approach nearer to the vegetable, perchance, than bulls and cows, and hence their bulky bodies, and large and spreading horns. Nothing more natural than that a deer should appear with a tree growing out of his head.

Feb. 16, 1854. By this time in the winter I

do not look for those clear sparkling mornings and delicate leaf frosts which seem to belong to the earlier part of the winter, as if the air were now somewhat tarnished and debauched, had lost its virgin purity.

Every judgment and action of a man qualifies every other, *i. e.*, corrects our estimation of every other, as, for instance, a man's idea of immortality who is a member of a church, or his praise of you coupled with his praise of those whom you do not esteem. For, in this sense, a man is awfully consistent above his own consciousness. All a man's strength and all his weakness go to make up the authority of any particular opinion which he may utter. . . . If he is your friend, you may have to consider that he loves you, but perchance he also loves gingerbread. . . .

Columella, after saying that many authors had believed that the climate, *qualitatem cœli statumque*, was changed by lapse of time, *longo ævi situ*, refers to Hipparchus as having given out that the time would be when the poles of the earth would be moved from their places, *tempus fore quo cardines mundi loco moverentur;* and as confirmatory of this, he, Columella, goes on to say that the vine and olive flourish now in some places where formerly they failed. He gives the names of about fifty authors who had treated *de rusticis rebus* before him.

Feb. 16, 1857. . . . I perceive that some (commonly talented) persons are enveloped and confined by a certain crust of manners, which, though it may sometimes be a fair and transparent enamel, yet only repels and saddens the beholder, since by its rigidity it seems to repress all further expansion. They are viewed as at a distance, like an insect under a tumbler. They have, as it were, prematurely hardened both seed and shell, and this has severely taxed, if not put a period to, the life of the plant. This is to stand upon your dignity. . . . Such persons are after all but hardened sinners in a mild sense. The pearl is a hardened sinner. Manners get to be human parchment, in which sensible books are often bound and honorable titles engrossed, though they may be very stiff and dry.

Feb. 16, 1859. From the entrance of the mill road, I look back through the sunlight, this soft afternoon, to some white pine tops near Jenny Dugan's. Their flattish boughs rest stratum above stratum like a cloud, a green mackerel sky, hardly reminding me of the concealed earth so far beneath. They are like a flaky crust of the earth, a more ethereal, terebinthine, evergreen earth. It occurs to me that my eyes rest on them with the same pleasure as do those of the henhawk which has been nestled in them. My eyes nibble the piny sierra which makes

the horizon's edge as a hungry man nibbles a cracker. The henhawk and the pine are friends. The same thing which keeps the henhawk in the woods, away from cities, keeps me here. That bird settles with confidence on a white pine top, and not upon your weather-cock. That bird will not be poultry of yours, lays no eggs for you, forever hides its nest. Though *willed* or *wild*, it is not willful in its wildness. The unsympathizing man regards the wildness of some animals, their strangeness to him, as a sin, as if all their virtue consisted in their tamableness. He has always a charge in his gun ready for their extermination. What we call wildness is a civilization other than our own. The henhawk shuns the farmer, but it seeks the friendly shelter and support of the pine. It will not consent to walk in the barnyard, but it loves to soar above the clouds. It has its own way and is beautiful when we would fain subject it to our will. So any surpassing work of art is strange and wild to the mass of men, as is genius itself. No hawk that soars and steals our poultry is wilder than genius, and none is more persecuted or above persecution. It can never be poet laureate, to say, "Pretty Poll," and "Polly want a cracker."

Feb. 17, 1841. Our work should be fitted to and lead on the time, as bud, flower, and fruit

lead the circle of the seasons. — The mechanic works no longer than his labor will pay for lights, fuel, and shop rent. Would it not be well for us to consider if our deed will warrant the expense of nature? Will it maintain the sun's light? — Our actions do not use time independently, as the bud does. They should constitute its lapse. It is their room. But they shuffle after and serve the hour.

Feb. 17, 1852. Perhaps the peculiar attractiveness of those western vistas was partly owing to the shortness of the days, when we naturally look to the heavens and make the most of the little light, when we live an arctic life, when the woodchopper's axe reminds us of twilight at three o'clock in the afternoon, when the morning and the evening literally make the whole day, when we travel as it were through the portals of the night, and the way is narrow as well as blocked with snow, when, too, the sun has the least opportunity to fill the air with vapor. . . .

If you would read books on botany, go to the fathers of the science. Read Linnæus at once, and come down from him as far as you please. I lost much time reading the florists. It is remarkable how little the mass of those interested in botany are acquainted with Linnæus. I doubt if his "Philosophia Botanica," which Rousseau, Sprengel, and others praised so highly, has

ever been translated into English. It is simpler, more easy to understand, than any of the hundred manuals to which it has given birth. A few pages of cuts representing the different parts of plants, with their botanical names attached, are worth whole volumes of explanation. According to the classification of Linnæus, I come under the head of Miscellaneous Botanophilists. "Botanophili sunt qui varia de vegetabilibus tradiderunt, licet ea non proprie ad scientiam Botanicam spectant."

Feb. 17, 1854. P. M. To Gowing's Swamp. . . . The mice tracks are very amusing. It is surprising how numerous they are, and yet I rarely see a mouse. They must be nocturnal in their habits. Any tussocky ground is scored with them. I see, too, where they have run over the ice on the swamp (there is a mere sugaring of snow on it), ever trying to make an entrance, to get beneath it. You see deep and distinct channels in the snow in some places, as if a whole colony had long traveled to and fro in them, a highway, a well-known trail, but suddenly they will come to an end. And yet they have not dived beneath the surface, for you see where the single traveler who did it all has nimbly hopped along, as if suddenly scared, making but a slight impression, squirrel-like, in the snow. The squirrel also, though rarely, will

make a channel for a short distance. . . . I suspect that the mice sometimes build their nests in bushes from the foundation, for . . . where I found two mice nests last fall, I find one begun with a very few twigs and some moss, close by where the others were, at the same height, and also on Prinos bushes, plainly the work of mice wholly.

Feb. 18, 1838. . . . I had not been out long to-day when it seemed that a new spring was already born; not quite weaned, it is true, but verily entered upon existence. Nature struck up "the same old song in the grass," despite eighteen inches of snow. . . .

Feb. 18, 1840. All romance is grounded on friendship. What is this rural, this pastoral, this poetic life but its invention? Does not the moon shine for Endymion? Smooth pastures and mild airs are for some Coridon and Phyllis. Paradise belongs to Adam and Eve. Plato's Republic is governed by Platonic love.

Feb. 18, 1841. . . . My recent growth does not appear in any visible new talent; but its deed will enter into my gaze when I look into the sky or vacancy. It will help me to consider ferns and everlasting.

Man is like a tree which is limited to no age, but grows as long as it has its root in the ground. We have only to live in the alburnum, and not in the old wood.

A man is the hydrostatic paradox, the counterpoise of the system. You have studied flowers and birds cheaply enough, but you must lay yourself out to buy him.

Feb. 18, 1852. . . . I have a commonplace book for facts, and another for poetry, but I find it difficult always to preserve the vague distinction which I had in my mind, for the most interesting and beautiful facts are so much the more poetry, and that is their success. They are translated from earth to heaven. I see that if my facts were sufficiently vital and significant, perhaps transmuted more into the substance of the human mind, I should need but one book of poetry to contain them all.

It is impossible for the same person to see things from the poet's point of view and that of the man of science. The poet's second love may be science (not his first), when use has worn off the bloom. I realize that men may be born to a condition of mind at which others arrive in middle age by the decay of their poetic faculties.

Feb. 18, 1854. . . . It is a little affecting to walk over the hills now, looking at the reindeer lichens here and there amid the snow, and remember that erelong we shall find violets also in their midst. What an odds the season makes! The birds know it; whether a rose-tinted water lily is sailing amid the pads, or neighbor Hob-

son is getting out his ice with a cross-cut saw, while his oxen are eating their stalks. I noticed that the ice which Garrison cut the other day contained the lily pads and stems within it. How different their environment now from when the queenly flower, floating on the trembling surface, exhaled its perfume amid a cloud of insects! . . .

What a contrast between the upper and under side of many leaves, the indurated and colored upper side, and the tender, more or less colorless under side, male and female, even when they are almost equally exposed. The under side is commonly white, however, as turned away from the light toward the earth. Many in which the contrast is finest are narrow, revolute leaves, like the delicate and beautiful *Andromeda Polifolia*, the ledum, *Kalmia glauca*. . . . The handsome lanceolate leaves of the *Andromeda Polifolia*, dark, but pure and uniform dull red above, strongly revolute, and of a delicate bluish-white beneath, deserve to be copied on works of art.

Feb. 18, 1857. . . . P. M. The frost out of the ground and the ways settled in many places. . . . I am excited by this wonderful air, and go listening for the note of the bluebird or other comer. The very grain of the air seems to have undergone a change, and is ready to split into the form of the bluebird's warble. Methinks if

it were visible, or I could cast up some fine dust which would betray it, it would take a corresponding shape. The bluebird does not come till the air consents, and his wedge will enter easily. . . .

What a poem is this of spring, so often repeated! I am thrilled when I hear it spoken of as the Spring of such a year, that Fytte of the glorious epic.

Feb. 18, 1860. . . . I think the most important requisite in describing an animal is to be sure that you give its character and spirit, for in that you have, without error, the sum and effect of all its parts, known and unknown. You must tell what it is to man. Surely the most important part of an animal is its *anima*, its vital spirit, on which is based its character, and all the particulars by which it most concerns us. Yet most scientific books which treat of animals leave this out altogether, and what they describe are, as it were, phenomena of dead matter. What is most interesting in a dog, for instance, is his attachment to his master, his intelligence, courage, and the like, and not his anatomical structure, and even many habits which affect us less. If you have undertaken to write the biography of an animal, you must present to us the *living* creature, *i. e.*, a result which no man can understand. He can only, in his degree, report

the impression made by it on him. Science, in many departments of Natural History, does not pretend to go beyond the shell, *i. e.*, it does not get to animated nature at all. A history of animated nature must itself be animated. The ancients, one would say, with their Gorgons, Sphinxes, Satyrs, Mantichora, etc., could imagine more than existed, while the moderns cannot imagine so much as exists.

We are as often injured as benefited by our systems, for, in fact, no human system is a true one. A name is at most a convenience, and carries no information with it. As soon as I begin to be aware of the life of any creature, I forget its name. When we have learned to distinguish creatures, the sooner we forget their names the better, so far as any true appreciation of them is concerned. I think, therefore, that the best and most harmless names are those which are an imitation of the voice or note of an animal, as they are the most poetic ones. But the name adheres only to the accepted and conventional bird or quadruped, never an instant to the real one. There is always something ridiculous in the name of a great man, as if he were named John Smith. The name is convenient in communicating with others, but it is not to be remembered when I communicate with myself.

If you look over a list of medicinal recipes in

vogue in the last century, how foolish and useless they are seen to be, and yet we use equally absurd ones with faith to-day.

Feb. 19, 1841. A truly good book . . . teaches me better than to read it. I must soon lay it down, and commence living on its hint. I do not see how any can be written more, but this is the last effusion of genius. . . . It is slipping out of my fingers while I read. It creates no atmosphere in which it may be perused, but one in which its teachings may be practiced. It confers on me such wealth that I lay it down with the least regret. What I began by reading, I must finish by acting. So I cannot stay to hear a good sermon, and applaud at the conclusion, but shall be half-way to Thermopylæ before that.

We linger in manhood to tell the dreams of our childhood, and they are half forgotten ere we acquire the faculty of expressing them.

It is the unexplored grandeur of the storm which keeps up the spirits of the traveler. When I contemplate a hard and bare life in the woods, I find my last consolation in its untrivialness. Shipwreck is less distressing because the breakers do not trifle with us. We are resigned as long as we recognize the sober and solemn mystery of nature. The dripping mariner finds consolation and sympathy in the infinite sublim-

ity of the storm. It is a moral force as well as he. With courage he can lay down his life on the strand, for it never turned a deaf ear to him, nor has he ever exhausted its sympathy.

In the love of narrow souls I make many short voyages, but in vain. I find no sea room But in great souls, I sail before the wind without a watch, and never reach the shore.

Feb. 19, 1852. The sky appears broader now than it did. The day has opened its eyelids wider. The lengthening of the days, commenced a good while ago, is a kind of forerunner of the spring. Of course it is then that the ameliorating cause begins to work.

To White Pond. . . . The strains from my muse are as rare nowadays or of late years as the notes of birds in the winter, the faintest occasional tinkling sound, and mostly of the woodpecker kind, or the harsh jay, or the crow. It never melts into a song, only the *day-day-day* of an inquisitive titmouse.

Everywhere snow, gathered into sloping drifts about the walls and fences, and beneath the snow the frozen ground, and men are compelled to deposit the summer's provision in burrows in the earth, like the ground squirrel. Many creatures, daunted by the prospect, migrated in the fall, but man remains, and walks over the frozen snow crust, and over the stiff

ened rivers and ponds, and draws now upon his summer stores. Life is reduced to its lowest terms. There is no home for you now in this freezing wind, but in that shelter which you prepared in the summer. You steer straight across the fields to that in season. I can with difficulty tell when I am over the river. There is a similar crust over my heart. Where I rambled in the summer, and gathered flowers, and rested on the grass by the brook side in the shade, now no grass, nor flowers, nor brook, nor shade, but cold unvaried snow, stretching mile after mile, and no place to sit. Look at White Pond, that crystal drop that was, in which the umbrageous shore was reflected, and schools of fabulous perch and shiners rose to the surface, and where with difficulty you made your way along the pebbly shore in a summer afternoon, to the bathing place. Now you stalk rapidly across where it was, muffled in your cloak, over a more level snow field than usual, furrowed by the wind; its finny inhabitants and its pebbly shore all hidden and forgotten, and you would shudder at the thought of wetting your feet in it.

A fine display of the northern lights after ten P. M., flashing up from all parts of the horizon to the zenith, where there was a kind of core formed, stretching S.S.E. N.N.W., surrounded by what looked like a permanent white cloud,

which, however, was very variable in form. The light flashes or trembles upward, as if it were the light of the sun reflected from a frozen mist in the upper atmosphere.

Feb. 19, 1854. . . . To Fair Haven by river, back by railroad. . . . The large moths apparently love the neighborhood of water, and are wont to suspend their cocoons over the edge of the meadow and river, places more or less inaccessible to men, at least. I saw a button-bush with what, at first sight, looked like the open pods of the locust or of the water asclepias, attached. They were the light, ash-colored cocoons of the Attacus Promethea, with the completely withered and faded leaves wrapped around them, carefully and admirably secured to the twigs by fine silk wound round the leaf stalk and the twig. They add nothing to the strength of the cocoon, being deciduous, but aid in deception. They are taken at a little distance for a few curled and withered leaves left on. Though the particular twigs on which you find some cocoons may never, or very rarely, retain any leaves, there are enough leaves left on other shrubs and trees to warrant the adoption of this disguise. Yet it is startling to think that the inference has in this case been drawn by some mind, that as most other plants retain some leaves, the walker will suspect these also to.

Each and all such disguises and other resources remind us that not merely some poor worm's instinct, as we call it, but the mind of the universe rather, which we share, has been intended upon each particular object. All the wit in the world was brought to bear on each case to secure its end. It was long ago in a full senate of all intellects determined how cocoons had best be suspended. Kindred mind with mine, that approves and admires, decided it so. . . .

Much study, a weariness of the flesh, eh? But did they not intend that we should read and ponder, who covered the whole earth with alphabets, primers, or Bibles, coarse or fine print? The very débris of the cliffs . . . are covered with geographic lichens. No surface is permitted to be bare long. . . . Was not he who creates lichens the abettor of Cadmus when he invented letters? Types almost arrange themselves into words and sentences, as dust arranges itself under the magnet. Print! it is a close-hugging lichen that forms on a favorable surface, which paper offers. The linen gets itself wrought into paper that the song of the shirt may be printed on it. Who placed us with eyes between a microscopic and a telescopic world?

Feb. 19, 1855. Many will complain of my lectures that they are transcendental, can't under

stand them "Would you have us return to the savage state?" etc., etc., a criticism true enough, it may be, from their point of view. But the fact is, the earnest lecturer can speak only to his like, and adapting himself to his audience is a mere compliment which he pays them. If you wish to know how I think, you must endeavor to put yourself in my place. If you wish me to speak as if I were you, that is another affair.

Feb. 19, 1857. A man cannot be said to succeed in this life who does not satisfy one friend.

Feb. 19, 1858. The traveler is defended and calloused. He deals with surfaces, has a great coat on; but he who stays at home and writes about homely things gives us naked and tender thoughts and sentiments.

Feb. 20, 1840. The coward's hope is suspicion; the hero's doubt, a sort of hope. The gods neither hope nor doubt.

Feb. 20, 1841. When I am going out for an evening, I arrange the fire in my stove so that I do not fail to find a good one when I return, though it would have engaged my frequent attention, present; so that when I know I am to be at home, I sometimes make believe that I may go out to save trouble. And this is the art of living, too, to leave our life in a condition to go alone, and not to require a constant supervis-

ion. We will then sit down serenely to live, as by the side of a stove.

When I sit in earnest, nothing must stand. All must be sedentary with me.

I hear the faint sound of a viol and voices from the neighboring cottage, and think to myself, I will believe the muse only forevermore. It assures me that no gleam which comes over the serene soul is deceptive. It warns me of a reality and substance of which the best that I see is but the phantom and shadow. O Music, thou tellest me of things of which memory takes no heed; thy strains are whispered aside from memory's ear. . . . Thou openest all my senses to catch the least hint, and givest me no thought. It would be good to sit at my door of summer evenings forever, and hear thy strains. Thou makest me to toy with speech, or walk content without it. . . . I am pleased to think how ignorant and shiftless the wisest are.

My imperfect sympathies with my friend are a cheerful, glimmering light in the valley.

Feb. 20, 1842. I never yet saw two men sufficiently great to meet as two. In proportion as they are great, the differences are fatal, because they are felt not to be partial, but total. Frankness to him who is unlike me will lead to the utter denial of him. . . . When two approach to meet, they incur no petty dangers;

they run terrible risks. Between the sincere there will be no civilities. No greatness seems prepared for the little decorums; even savage unmannerliness it meets from equal greatness.

My path hitherto has been like a road through a diversified country, now climbing high mountains, then descending into the lowest vales. From the summits I saw the heavens, from the vales I looked up at the heights again. In prosperity I remember God, or memory is one with consciousness; in adversity I remember my own elevation, and only hope to see God again. . . .

The death of friends should inspire us as much as their lives. If they are great and rich enough, they will leave consolation to the mourners before the expenses of their funerals. It will not be hard to part with worth, because it is worthy. How can any good depart? It does not go and come, but we.

Feb. 20, 1856. P. M. Up Assabet. See a broad and distinct otter trail made last night or yesterday. It came out to the river through the low woods N. of Pinxter swamp, making a very conspicuous trail from seven to nine or ten inches wide and three or four deep, with sometimes singularly upright sides, as if a square timber had been drawn along, but commonly rounded. It made some short turns and zigzags, passed under limbs which were only five inches above

the snow, not over them, had apparently slid down all banks and declivities, making a uniform, broad, hollow trail there, without any marks of its feet. On reaching the river, it had come along under the bank, from time to time looking into the crevices, where it might get under the ice, sometimes ascending the bank and sliding back. On level ground its trail had this appearance . . . tracks of feet twenty to twenty-four inches apart, but sometimes there was no track of the feet for twenty-five feet, frequently for six. In the last case there was a swelling in the outline as above. . . . It entered a hole under the ice at Assabet spring, from which it has not issued.

Feb. 20, 1857. What is the relation between a bird and the ear that appreciates its melody, to whom, perchance, it is more charming and significant than to any one else? Certainly they are intimately related, and the one was made for the other. It is a natural fact. If I were to discover that a certain kind of stone by the pond shore was affected, say partially disintegrated, by a particular natural sound, as of a bird or insect, I see that one could not be completely described without describing the other. I am that stone by the pond side.

What is hope, what is expectation, but a seed

time whose harvest cannot fail, an irresistible expedition of the mind, at length to be victorious?

Feb. 20, 1859. Have just read "Counterparts, or the Cross of Love," by the author of "Charles Auchester." It is very interesting, its illustration of Love and Friendship, as showing how much we can know of each other through sympathy merely, without any of the ordinary information. You know about a person who deeply interests you more than you can be told. A look, a gesture, an act, which to everybody else is insignificant, tells you more about that one than words can. . . . If he wished to conceal something from you, it would be apparent. It is as if a bird told you. . . . Sometimes from the altered manner of a friend which no cloak can possibly conceal, we know that something has happened, and what it was, all the essential particulars, though it would be a long story to tell, though it may involve the agency of four or five persons, who never breathed it to you, yet you are sure as if you detected all their tracks in the wood. You are the more sure, because, in the case of love, effects follow their causes more inevitably than usual, this being a controlling power.

How much the writer lives and endures in coming before the public so often! A few years or books are with him equal to a long life of ex-

perience, suffering, etc. It is well if he does not become hardened. He learns how to bear contempt, and to despise himself. He makes, as it were, a post-mortem examination of himself before he is dead. Such is art.

Feb. 21, 1842. . . . I must confess there is nothing so strange to me as my own body. I love any other piece of nature, almost, better.

I was always conscious of sounds in nature which my ears could not hear, that I caught but a prelude to a strain. She always retreats as I advance. Away behind and behind is she and her meaning. Will not this faith and expectation make itself ears at length? I never saw to the end, nor heard to the end, but the best part was unseen and unheard.

I am like a feather floating in the atmosphere. On every side is depth unfathomable.

I have lived ill [of late] for the most part, because too near myself. I have tripped myself up, so that there was no progress for my own narrowness. I cannot walk conveniently and pleasantly but when I hold myself far off in the horizon, but when the soul dilutes the body and makes it passable. My soul and body have tottered along together, . . . tripping and hindering one another, like unpracticed Siamese twins. They two should walk as one that no obstacle may be nearer than the firmament.

There must be some narrowness in the soul that compels one to have secrets.

Feb. 21, 1855. . . . A clear air, with a northwesterly March-like wind, as yesterday. What is the peculiarity in the air that both the invalid in his chamber and the traveler on the highway say, "These are perfect March days"? The wind is rapidly drying up the earth, and elevated sands already begin to look whitish. How much light there is in the sky and on the surface of the russet earth! It is reflected in a flood from all cleansed surfaces which rain and snow have washed, from the railroad rails, the mica on the rocks and the silvery latebræ of insects there, and I never saw the white houses of the village more brightly white. Now look for an early crop of arrowheads, for they will shine. When I have entered the wooded hollow on the east of the Deep Cut, it is novel and pleasant to hear the sound of the dry leaves and twigs, which have so long been damp and silent, crackling again under my feet, though there is still considerable snow along wall-sides, etc., and to see the holes and galleries recently made by the mice (?) in the fine withered grass of such places. I see the peculiar softened blue sky of spring over the tops of the pines, and when I am sheltered from the wind I feel the warmer sun of the season reflected from the withered

grass and twigs on the side of this elevated hollow. . . . When the leaves on the forest floor are dried and begin to rustle under such a sun and wind as these, the news is told to how many myriads of grubs that underlie them! When I perceive this dryness under my feet, I feel as if I had got a new sense, or rather I realize what was incredible to me before, that there is a new life in nature beginning to awake. . . . It is whispered through all the aisles of the forest that another spring is approaching. The wood mouse listens at the mouth of his burrow, and the chickadee passes the news along. We now notice the snow on the mountains, because on the remote rim of the horizon its whiteness contrasts with the russet and darker hues of our bare fields. I looked at the Peterboro mountains, with my glass, from Fair Haven hill. I think there can be no more arctic scene than these mountains, on the edge of the horizon, completely crusted over with snow, the sun shining on them, seen through a telescope over bare russet fields and dark forests, with perhaps a house on some bare ridge seen against them. They look like great loaves incrusted with pure white sugar, and I think this must have been the origin of the name "sugar-loaf" sometimes given to mountains, and not their form. We look thus from russet fields into a landscape still sleeping under

the mantle of winter. The snow on the mountains has, in this case, a singular smooth and crusty appearance, and by contrast you see even single evergreens rising here and there above it; and where a promontory casts a shadow along the mountain side, I saw what looked like a large lake of misty, bluish water on the side of the farther Peterboro mountain, its edges or shore very distinctly defined. This I concluded was the shadow of another part of the mountain, and it suggested that in like manner what on the surface of the moon is taken for water may be shadows.

Feb. 21, 1860. . . . It was their admiration of nature that made the ancients attribute those magnanimous qualities, which are rarely to be found in man, to the lion, as her masterpiece. It is only by a readiness or preparedness to see more than appears in a creature that we can appreciate what is manifest.

Feb. 21, 1861. . . . This plucking and stripping of a pine cone is a business which he [the squirrel] and his family understand perfectly. . . . He does not prick his fingers, nor pitch his whiskers, nor gnaw the solid cone any more than he needs to. Having sheared off the twigs and needles that may be in his way (for, like a skillful wood-chopper, he first secures room and verge enough), he neatly cuts off the stout stem

of the cone with a few strokes of his chisels, and it is his. To be sure, he may let it fall to the ground, and look down at it for a moment curiously, as if it were not his. But he is taking note where it lies, that he may add it to his heap of a hundred more like it, and it is only so much the more his for his seeming carelessness. And when he comes to open it, observe how he proceeds. He holds it in his hands a solid embossed cone, so hard it almost rings at the touch of his teeth. He pauses for a moment, perhaps, but it is not because he does not know how to begin. He only listens to hear what is in the wind. He knows better than to cut off the top, and work his way downward against a *cheval-de-frise* of advanced scales and prickles, or to gnaw into the side for three quarters of an inch in the face of many armed shields. He whirls it bottom upward in a twinkling, where the scales are smallest and the prickles slight or none, and the short stem is cut so close as not to be in his way, and there he proceeds to cut through the thin and tender bases of the scales, and each stroke tells, laying bare at once a couple of seeds. Thus he strips it as easily as if its scales were chaff, and so rapidly, twirling it as he advances, that you cannot tell how he does it till you drive him off, and inspect his unfinished work. If there ever was an age of the world when the

squirrels opened their cones at the wrong end, it was not the golden age, at any rate.

Feb. 22, 1841. . . . Friends will be much apart. They will respect more each other's privacy than their communion, for therein is the fulfillment of our high aims and the conclusion of our arguments. That we know and would associate with, not only has high intents, but goes on high errands, and has much private business. The hours my friend devotes to me were snatched from a higher society. He is hardly a gift level to me, but I have to reach up to take it. . . .

We have to go into retirement religiously, and enhance our meeting by rarity and a degree of unfamiliarity. Would you know why I see thee so seldom, my friend? In solitude I have been making up a packet for thee.

Some actions which grow out of common but natural relations affect me strangely, as sometimes the behavior of a mother to her children. So quiet and noiseless an action often moves me more than many sounding exploits.

Feb. 22, 1852. . . . Every man will take such views as he can afford to take. Views one would think were the most expensive guests to entertain. I perceive that the reason my neighbor cannot entertain certain views is the narrow limits within which he is obliged to live on account of the smallness of his means. His

instinct tells him that it will not do to relax his hold here, and take hold where he cannot keep hold.

Feb. 22, 1855. . . . J. Farmer showed me an ermine weasel he caught in a trap three or four weeks ago. They are not very uncommon about his barns. All white but the tip of the tail. Two conspicuous canine teeth in each jaw. In summer they are distinguished from the red weasel, which is a little smaller, by the length of their tails particularly, six or more inches, while the red one's is not more than two inches long. . . . He had seen a partridge drum standing on a wall; said it stood very upright, and produced the sound by striking its wings together behind its back, as a cock often does, but did not strike the wall nor its body. This he is sure of, and declares that he is mistaken who affirms the contrary, though it were Audubon himself. Wilson says he "begins to strike with his stiffened wings," while standing on a log, but does not say what he strikes, though one would infer it was either the log or his body. Peabody says he beats his body with his wings.

Feb. 22, 1856. . . . Now first, the snow melting and the ice beginning to soften, I see those slender, grayish-winged insects creeping with closed wings over the snow-clad ice. Have seen none before this winter. They are on all

parts of the river, of all sizes, from one third of an inch to an inch long; are to be seen every warm day afterward.

Feb. 23, 1841. . . . There is a subtle elixir in society which makes it a fountain of health to the sick. We want no consolation which is not the overflow of our friend's health. We will have no condolence, who are not dolent ourselves. We would have our friend come and respire healthily before us with the fragrance of many meadows and heaths in his breath, and we will inhabit his body while our own recruits. — Nothing is so good medicine in sickness as to witness some nobleness in another which will advertise us of health. In sickness it is our faith that ails, and noble deeds reassure us.

That anybody has thought of you on some indifferent occasion frequently implies more good will than you had reason to expect. You have henceforth a stronger motive for conduct. We do not know how many amiable thoughts are current.

Feb. 23, 1842. . . . True politeness is only hope and trust in men. It never addresses a fallen or falling man, but salutes a rising generation. It does not flatter, but only congratulates.

Feb. 23, 1853. . . . I think myself in a wilder country, and a little nearer to primitive times,

when I read in old books which spell the word savages with an *l* (salvages), like John Smith's "General Historie of Virginia," etc., reminding me of the derivation of the word from *sylva*, some of the wild wood and its bristling branches still left in their language. The savages they describe are really salvages, men of the woods.

Feb. 23, 1854. A. M. The snow drives horizontally from the north or northwesterly in long waving lines like the outline of a swell or billow.

P. M. Saw some of those architectural drifts forming. The fine snow came driving along over the field like steam curling from a roof. As the current rises to go over the wall, it produces a lull in the angle made by the wall and the ground, and accordingly just enough snow is deposited there to fill the triangular calm, but the greater part passes over, and is deposited in the larger calm. A portion of the wind also apparently passes through the chinks of the wall, and curves upward against the main drift, appearing to carve it, and perforate it in various fashions, holding many snowy particles in suspension, in vertical eddies. I am not sure to what extent the drift is carved and perforated, and how far the snow is originally deposited in these forms.

Feb. 23, 1855. Mr. Loring says that he and

his son George fired at white swans in Texas on the water, and though George shot two with ball, and killed them, the others in each case gathered about them, and crowded them off out of their reach.

Feb. 23, 1856. . . . I read in the papers that the ocean is frozen, or has been lately, on the back side of Cape Cod, at the Highland Light, one mile out from the shore (not to bear or walk on probably), a phenomenon which, it is said, the oldest have not witnessed before.

Feb. 23, 1857. P. M. See two yellow-spotted tortoises in the ditch S. of Trillium wood. You saunter expectant in the mild air along the soft edge of a ditch filled with melted snow, and paved with leaves in some sheltered place, yet perhaps with some ice at one end still, and are thrilled to see stirring mid the leaves at the bottom, sluggishly burying themselves from your sight again, these brilliantly spotted creatures. There are commonly two, at least. The tortoise is stirring in the ditches again. In your latest spring, they still look incredibly strange when first seen, and not like cohabitants and contemporaries of yours.

I say in my thought to my neighbor who was once my friend, It is of no use to speak the truth to you. You will not hear it. What then shall I say to you?

At the instant that I seem to be saying farewell forever to one who has been my friend, I find myself unexpectedly near to him, and it is our very nearness and dearness to each other that gives depth and significance to that "forever." Thus I am a helpless prisoner, and these chains I have no skill to break. While I think I have broken one link, I have been forging another. — I have not yet known a Friendship to cease, I think. I fear I have experienced its decaying. Morning, noon, and night, I suffer a physical pain, an aching of the breast which unfits me for my tasks. It is perhaps most intense at evening. With respect to Friendship I feel like a wreck that is driving before the gale, with a crew suffering from hunger and thirst, not knowing what shore, if any, they may reach, so long have I breasted the conflicting waves of this sentinent, my seams open and my timbers laid bare. I float on Friendship's sea simply because my specific gravity is less than its, but no longer that stanch and graceful vessel that careened so buoyantly over it. My planks and timbers are scattered. At most I hope to make a sort of raft of Friendship on which with a few of our treasures we may float to some firm land. — That aching of the breast, the grandest pain that man endures, which no ether can assuage!

You cheat me, you keep me at a distance with your manners. I know of no other dishonesty, no other devil. Why this doubleness, these compliments? They are the worst of lies. A lie is not worse between traders than a compliment between friends. I would not, I cannot speak. I will let you *feel* my thought, my feeling. — Friends! They are united for good, for evil. They can delight each other as none other can. Lying on lower levels is but a trivial offense compared with civility and compliments on the level of Friendship.

I visit my friend for joy, not for disturbance. If my coming hinders him in the least conceivable degree, I will exert myself to the utmost to stay away. I will get the Titans to help me stand aloof, will labor night and day to construct a rampart between us. If my coming casts but the shadow of a shadow before it, I will retreat swifter than the wind, and more untrackable. I will be gone irrevocably, if possible, before he fears that I am coming.

If the teeth ache, they can be pulled. If the heart aches, what then? Shall we pluck it out?

Must friends then expect the fate of those oriental twins, that one shall at last bear about the corpse of the other, by that same ligature that bound him to a living companion?

Look before you leap. Let the isthmus be

cut through, unless sea meets sea at exactly the same level, unless a perfect understanding and equilibrium has been established from the beginning around Cape Horn and that unnamed northern cape, what a tumult! It is Atlantic and Atlantic, or Atlantic and Pacific.

I have seen signs of the spring. I have seen a frog swiftly sinking in a pool, or where he dimpled the surface as he leapt in, I have seen the brilliant spotted tortoise stirring at the bottom of ditches, I have seen the clear sap trickling from the red maple.

Feb. 23, 1859. [Worcester.] P. M. Walk to Quinsigamond Pond, where was good skating yesterday, but this very pleasant and warm day it is suddenly quite too soft. I was just saying to Blake that I should look for hard ice in the shade or on the N. side of some wooded hill close to the shore, though skating was out of the question elsewhere, when looking up I saw a gentleman and lady very gracefully gyrating, and, as it were, courtesying to each other, in a small bay under such a hill on the opposite shore of the pond. Intervening bushes and shore concealed the ice, so that their swift and graceful motions, their bodies inclined at various angles, as they gyrated forward and backward about a small space, looking as if they would hit each other, reminded me of the circling of two

winged insects in the air, or hawks receding and approaching.

I first hear and then see eight or ten bluebirds going over.

Feb. 23, 1860. 3 P. M. Thermometer 58° and snow almost gone, river rising. We have not had so warm a day since the beginning of December, which was unusually warm. I walk over the moist Nawshawtuck hillside, and see the green radical leaves of the buttercup, shepherd's purse, sorrel, chickweed, cerastium, etc., revealed.

A fact must be the vehicle of some humanity in order to interest us. Otherwise it is like giving a man a stone when he asks for bread. Ultimately the moral is all in all, and we do not mind it if inferior truth is sacrificed to superior, as when the annalist fables, and makes animals speak and act like men. It must be warm, moist, incarnated, have been breathed on at least. A man has not seen a thing who has not felt it.

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